



UGANDA MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND STUDENT RETENTION IN UNIVERSAL
SECONDARY EDUCATION SCHOOLS: A CASE OF MBALE
DISTRICT, EASTERN UGANDA**

By

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**A Dissertation submitted to the School of Management Sciences in partial
Fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Master's Degree in
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DECLARATION

I, George Wagaba, hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has never been submitted for any academic award in any institution or University for an academic award. Due acknowledgement has been made for the work of others in this work through quotations and references.

Signed

George Wagaba

Date.....

APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with our approval as the supervisors attached to George Wagaba.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, Regina K.Wagaba, and children, G.Arinitwe, G.Ankunda, G.Ayebare, L Ampeire and B.R.Birungi for their continued encouragement and support throughout this programme.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION i

APPROVAL ii

DEDICATION iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT iv

LIST OF
FIGURES.....
.....ix

LIST OF TABLES x

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS xi

ABSTRACT..... xii

INTRODUCTION 1

1.0 Introduction..... 1

1.1 Background to the Study..... 1

 1.1.1 Historical Background 3

 1.1.2 Theoretical Background 5

 1.1.3 Conceptual Background 5

 1.1.4 Contextual Background 8

1.2 Statement of the Problem..... 9

1.3 Purpose of the Study 9

1.4 Objectives of the Study 9

1.5 Research Questions 10

1.6 Research Hypotheses 10

1.7 Scope of the Study 11

1.8 Significance of the Study 11

1.9 Conceptual Framework..... 12

1.10 Justification of the Study 14

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms and Concepts 14

CHAPTER TWO 16

LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.0 Introduction.....	16
2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Review	16
2.1.1 Theoretical Review.....	16
2.1.2 Conceptual Review.....	18
2.2 Provision of School needs and Student Retention	21
2.3 Payment of Supplementary fees and Student Retention	23
2.4 Participation in School Meetings and Student Retention	26
2.5 Summary of literature review	27
CHAPTER THREE	28
METHODOLOGY	28
3.0 Introduction.....	28
3.1 Research Design.....	28
According to Kombo and Tromp (2009) a research design is the glue that holds all the elements in a research together.	28
3.2 Population of Study.....	28
3.2.1 Sample Size	29
3.2.2 Sampling Techniques	30
3.3 Data Collection Methods	30
3.3.1 Questionnaire survey	30
3.3.2 Interviewing guide.....	30
3.4 Data Collection Instruments	31
3.4.1 Questionnaire.....	31
3.4.2 Interview guide	31
3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Study Instrument.....	31
3.5.1 Validity of the Study Instrument	32
3.5.2 Reliability of the Study Instruments.....	32
3.6 Data Collection Procedure	33
3.7.1 Quantitative Analysis	33
3.7.2 Qualitative Analysis	33

3.8 Measurement of Variables	34
3.9 Ethical Consideration.....	34
CHAPTER FOUR.....	35
PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS	35
4.0. Introduction.....	35
4.1 Response rate	35
4.2 Background information about the respondents	36
4.3 Student retention rate in USE schools	40
4.4 The relationship between parents’ provision of school needs and student retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district.	41
4.6 The relationship between parents’ payment of supplementary fees and students’ retention rate in Universal secondary education schools in Mbale District.....	47
4.7 The relationship between parents’ participation in school meetings and students’ retention rate in Universal secondary education schools in Mbale District.....	52
CHAPTER FIVE	57
SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	57
5.0 Introduction.....	57
5.1 Summary of Study Findings	57
5.1.1 The relationship between parents’ provision of school needs and students’ retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district.....	57
5.1.2 The relationship between parents’ payment of supplementary fees and students’ retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district.....	57
5.1.3 The relationship between parents’ participation in school meetings and students’ retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district.	58
5.2. Discussion of study findings.....	58
5.2.1 The relationship between parents’ provision of school needs and students’ retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district.....	58
5.2.2 The relationship between parents’ payment of supplementary fees and students’ retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district.....	59
5.2.3 The relationship between parents’ participation in school meetings and students’ retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district.	60
5.3. Conclusions of the study.....	61

5.4 Recommendations.....	62
5.5 Limitations of the Study.....	63
5.6 Contributions of the Study.....	63
5.7 Recommendations for further studies.....	63
REFERENCES	65
APPENDICES	i
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND TEACHERS.....	i
APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENT LEADERS.....	iv
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR BOGS AND PTAREPRESENTATIVES .	viii
APPENDIX D: TABLE FOR DETERMINING SAMPLE SIZE FROM A GIVEN POPULATION.....	ix
Source: Adapted from R.V.Krejcie&D.W.Morgan (1970). Determining sample size for research activities.Educational and.....	ix
Note: “N” is population size “S” is sample size.	ix
APPENDIX E: LETTERS OF AUTHORITY	x

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework showing the relationship between the Independent Variable and the Dependent Variable..... 13

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Sample size of the respondents.....	29
Table 2: Reliability Statistics	32
Table 4: Gender of the respondents	37
Table 5: Age of respondents	38
Table 6: Working experience of the respondents	39
Table 7: Highest level of education of the respondents (teachers and head teachers).....	40
Table 8: Proportion of students retained in the sampled USE schools between the period 2012 and 2015.....	41
Table 9: Descriptive Statistics for parents' provision of school needs.....	42
Table 11: Descriptive Statistics for parents' payment of supplementary fees.....	48
Table 12: Pearson product moment correlation between parents' payment of supplementary fees and students' retention rate	50
Table 13: Descriptive Statistics for parents' participation in school meetings.....	53
Table 14: Pearson product moment correlation between parents' participation in school meetings and students' retention rate.....	54

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BOG	:	Board of Governors
EPRC	:	Education Policy Review Commission
H	:	Hypothesis
LC	:	Local Council
MoES	:	Ministry of Education and Sports
PTA	:	Parents and Teachers Association
USE	:	Universal Secondary Education
UPPET	:	Universal Post Primary Education and Training
UPE	:	Universal Primary Education
MDGs	:	Millennium Development Goals
P7	:	Primary Seven
S1	;	Senior one
S2-S4	:	Senior two to Senior Four
LC5	:	Local Council Five
UCE	:	Uganda Certificate of Education
MIML2	:	Masters in Institutional Management and Leadership year two

ABSTRACT

The study was about the relationship between parents' involvement and students' retention in Universal Secondary Education schools in Mbale district, Eastern Uganda. The research objectives of the study include the relationship between parents': provision of school needs, payment of supplementary fees, and participation in school meetings and students' retention rate. A cross sectional survey was used; adopting quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data from a sample of 196 respondents was obtained using questionnaires and interview guides which were analyzed descriptively and inferentially. The results of the study showed that parents' provision of school needs had a positive and significant relationship with students' retention ($r=0.967^{**}$, $\text{Sig}=0.007$); Student leave schools because parents are not able to provide for them the required school needs in terms of scholastic materials and personal effects .parents' payment of supplementary fees had a negative but insignificant relationship with students' retention($r=-0.116$, $\text{Sig}=0.750$), Parents payment of supplementary fees is not a problem to students retention because they are affordable and also in the reach of most parents and parents' participation in school meetings had a positive and significant relationship with students' retention ($r=0.967^{**}$, $\text{Sig}=0.007$ Most students parents do not participate in the school meeting hence a school information gap on care and support for the children, this therefore has affected students retention negatively). Of all the three aspects, no significant predictor was found for students' retention. In conclusion, Student leave schools because parents are not able to provide for them the required school needs in terms of scholastic materials and personal effects. Besides, Parents payment of supplementary fees is not a problem to students retention because they are affordable and also in the reach of most parents. Most students' parents do not participate in the school meeting hence a school information gap on care and support for the children; this therefore has affected student's retention negatively). It was recommended that management, government and other stakeholders should sensitize parents about their roles, responsibilities and benefits of actively involving themselves in the academic issues of their children.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study was focused on establishing the relationship between parents' involvement and students' retention in Universal Secondary Education schools; a case of Mbale district, Eastern Uganda. The independent variable is parental involvement whereas the dependent variable is student retention. This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, research hypotheses, significance of the study, scope of the study, justification of the study, conceptual framework, and operational definitions of terms and concepts.

1.1 Background to the Study

Universal Education is the stated goal of several international initiatives. Education access increased enormously in the past century. Illiteracy fell dramatically and a higher proportion of people are completing primary, secondary or tertiary education than ever before (Munene, 2011). Despite this progress, huge problems remain for providing universal access and high quality schooling through the Secondary level of Education. An estimated 299 million school-age going children were expected to miss primary or secondary school in 2015; of these an estimated 185 million would be missing secondary education. These statistics suggest that providing every child between the approximate ages of 6 and 17 with an education of high quality will require time, resources and colossal effort (Cohen, et al., 2005).

The United Nations Organization, under its auspices in 1948 in Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights declared, 'Everyone has a Right to Education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary Education shall be compulsory.....'. This was followed by the World Declaration of Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015. These were adopted by 189 Nations and signed by 147 during the UN Millennium Summit of September, 2000.

In the context of the 1992 Government White Paper on Education, the long term holistic Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP2004-2015), and the International long term commitment (in particular the Millennium Development Goals, MDGs), the government of Uganda formulated the Universal Post Primary Education and Training (UPPET) programme, under which USE falls. Since then many countries the world over have endeavored to implement the different aspects of that goal notably that of Free Primary and Secondary Education.

In Uganda, universal education commenced with UPE in 1997 when a total of 7.4 million pupils were enrolled in primary schools countrywide as opposed to 2.4 million a year earlier. Later government realized that the majority of the UPE graduates could not go beyond P7. The then Commissioner for Secondary Education, Dr. Y.K. Nsubuga said, 'Due to the high cost of secondary education the transition rate from primary to secondary level has been oscillating between 46-50%. Nsubuga continued to say, 'This was beginning to undermine efforts of the successful implementation and sustainability of the UPE programme very difficult'. The USE programme will make the UPE programme more solid and children will not stop at P7. Consequently, in 2006 government decided to introduce the UPPET programme to absorb the big numbers of UPE graduates because, parents could not afford the exorbitant fees payable in secondary schools at the time.

In February, 2007 government, through the MoES, launched the UPPET programme to cater for pupils from poor backgrounds who had completed P7 mainly from UPE schools. In 2006 Uganda became the first sub-Saharan country to adopt the policy of Free Secondary Education. According to records from the MoES in 2007 a total of 161,396 students were enrolled in S1 while 264,964 were enrolled in 2015. Again, according to the 2015 USE National Headcount Report, a total of 1,817 (943 public and 874 private) schools, with a total enrolment of 912,394 (487,144 males and 425,250 females) are implementing the USE programme. Out of the total enrolment, public schools hold 489,182 students while private schools hold 423,212 students.

1.1.1 Historical Background

Globally, education was originally considered as a public good that had to be provided by the governments with limited direct participation of other stakeholders, including parents, but most international conventions ascribe the responsibility to both the state and parents. However, this trend changed in the mid-1970s when leading economists in European universities and donor agencies began to criticize governments' direct involvement in service delivery (Adongo, 2006). The governments were criticized for mismanagement, inefficiency, corruption, lack of planning and related problems. Consequently, in the 1980s there was a shift to community involvement in service delivery.

The changing trend led to renewed interest from parents in the arena of education. A study conducted by Reenay& Vivian (2007) in Scottish schools concluded that for more than 10 years preceding 2006 (and perhaps in subsequent years), parents' role in school was the main factor responsible for "school market" in this sense meaning the popularity of the school. From Uganda's experience, the popularity of schools is so much linked to how many first grades a school may achieve in given consecutive years. This has prompted the researcher to establish the relationship between parents' involvement and student retention in USE schools. In relation to the foregoing arguments, secondary education in Uganda in public schools is largely provided by the government that also has the core responsibility of ensuring that student retention is maintained continuously. However, whether government- aided or private, schools rely heavily on parents' financial and managerial contribution. Unless all stakeholders like parents are involved, school achievements, including students' retention, may not be realized.

The history of the role of parents in school management and active involvement in the retention of their children in schools in Uganda today can be traced in the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC, 1989) report. Their responsibility revolves around financial mobilization, discipline and monitoring the performance of the school. Parents are said to be partners, clients, consumers and educational assistants in as far as management of schools is concerned (Thomson, 2001). However, involving parents in

Universal Secondary Education is difficult in Uganda and Mbale District, in particular, at the moment. One of the main contributing factors is explained by Nishimura and others (2009) in an analysis of the USE policy. The government told the Ugandan people, education is for free. Parents interpreted this message as if they didn't have to do anything and laid all responsibilities on the government. It is hard for schools to get parents to help them run the schools together and make quality education possible for their children. To undo this idea and to get parents actively involved, all kinds of methods are used by education experts in Uganda, though fruitful results have not been yielded.

The USE policy, which came on the heels of the UPE policy of 1997, is described as a 'pro-poor policy' aimed at improving transition rates between primary and secondary levels, national literacy rates and gender parity at secondary level. Since its inception, teachers, students, parents and the International community have been embroiled in debates over the purpose of USE, the government's commitment towards educational success and quality, and controversial (e.g, its implementation in selected schools and elimination of PTA funds) facets of this multi-tiered policy. (Molyneaus, Kritan, April, 2012).

It is important to realise that much as education was declared free, government funding was not enough to cover all the accompanying necessities of the schools like teachers' allowances, construction works, utility bills, travels and they play a big part in the education of the children.

Originally, under the USE program parents were left with the big role of providing scholastic materials, uniform, meals and medical care. Apparently now on top of these obligations there are supplementary fees parents, with difficulty, are expected to meet on top of the student personal needs and school requirements and the researcher feels, in combination, it is contributing towards the low retention rate of students in USE schools (Munene, 2011). The researcher was motivated to undertake this study because of the growing concern over the low retention of students in USE schools irrespective of government interventions like provision of capitation and development grants. Hence, it

is in the interest of the researcher to establish the relationship between parents' involvement and student retention in USE schools, taking a case study of Mbale district.

1.1.2 Theoretical Background

This study was underpinned by the Epstein's theory of involvement. It recognizes that there are some practices that parents and school conduct separately and some are conducted jointly towards their shared goal of maximizing children's outcomes (Epstein, 1992). While theorists and researchers have moved towards such a conceptualization of parent involvement, seeking children's education as the shared responsibility of families and schools, there is also evidence that in practice, a deficit approach still pervades in some contexts. (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). Moore and Lasky (2001) argue that deficit approaches to parental involvement are still alive and well when it comes to inclusion of minority, single parent and low socio economic status families. Epstein & Sanders (2006) expressed concern that early work on parental involvement neglected to offer insights about what schools could do to promote more extensive parental involvement. Dietz (1997) argued that when a school limits parental involvement (e.g. fundraising, committee membership), then only a small proportion of parents become involved. As a result, the school neither really involves parents nor reaps the potential benefits from parents' involvement. Instead, a more comprehensive model of parental involvement which elicits a wide variety of parental involvement is advocated (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Epstein and colleagues (Epstein, 1992) thus developed a typology which aimed to comprehensively categorize the variety of involvement activities in which parents could potentially engage. The relevancy of this theory is that it can explain ways through which parents are involved in the education attainment and progress of their children. It is through this theory that parents are expected to play their roles, responsibilities in conjunction with the school to meet educational attainment of their children.

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

The independent variable in this study was parents' involvement. According to Child Trends (2012), this involvement refers to parents attending school meetings with their children's teachers; attending school events; or volunteering in the school or serving on school committees. According to the researcher, parental involvement is an initiative

made by the parents as part of their responsibility for the children's psychosocial and educational development which is likely to relate positively with student retention in USE schools. Olatoye&Ogunkola (2008) defined parental involvement as a determinant of attitude towards learning, contribution to children's activities and promoting school based activities. Izzo et al (2009) in his study rated parental involvement as frequency of parent-teacher contact; quality of parent-teacher interaction; participation in educational activities in the home; and participation in school activities.

According to Weifeng& Jialing (2014), parental involvement refers to the basic obligations of parents and the involvement of parents in daily routines of the school and at home. In this study, parents' involvement is conceptualized as provision of school needs, payment of supplementary fees and participation in school meetings. Parents are said to be partners, clients, consumers and educational assistants in as far as management of schools is concerned. (Thomson, 2011). Desforges (2006) said that given parental investment in the classroom activities, school activities and functions, and in governance and advice, all the children in the school benefit. Keith (2008) however, discovered that parental involvement, has a negative association with student retention. For purposes of this research, parents' involvement is considered in terms of their contribution both physically and cognitively towards the establishment, implementation and effective provision of education in schools.

Parental involvement in schools presumes some kind of partnership between schools and parents. Partnerships between parents and schools are beneficial to school climate and school program improvement (Epstein, 1991). Moreover, parental involvement increases school attendance and improves student behavior and retention (Sheldon, 2009; Epstein, 2009). Other studies reveal the relationship between involvement of parents and retention of their children in school (Desforges&Abouchaar, 2003; Keith, 2004). Furthermore, parental involvement in children's schooling can result in teachers' increased understanding in children and their community, parents' increased understanding of how schools operate and opportunities for two-way communication between schools and parents.

Parental involvement in secondary education refers to the way parents, or caretakers, are engaged in their children's development and performance in education. The level of involvement can be partly visualized through parents' behaviour. This behaviour can be very divergent. Parents can participate in school activities, be a part of the management of the school, provide necessary supplies, support their children with homework at home, bring their children to school and discuss the wellbeing of their children with the teachers. These are examples of how parents construct a positive learning environment for their children (Gauvain & Perez, 2007).

Having looked at the concept of the independent variable, it is crucial to also talk about the dependent variable which in this case is student retention. Student retention occurs when a student enrolls each term till completion, studies full-time, and sits for National Examinations over a specified time duration. Retaining a student is fundamental to the ability of a school to carry out its mission. A high rate of attrition (the opposite of retention) is not only a fiscal problem for schools, but a symbolic failure of a school to achieve its purpose. Students who have economic, social, or educational advantages are the least likely to leave school, while students lacking these advantages are the most likely to leave (Berger & Lyon, 2005).

Student retention is a major indicator of student and school success within the secondary education community (Braxton, Hirschy & McClendon, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Webster & Showers, 2011). The majority of students come to secondary schools with the goal of obtaining a certificate. Schools with high retention rates are perceived as providing students with the resources, services and support systems needed to successfully obtain a certificate. However, high school student retention rates, considered to have a greater impact on the financial standing and reputation of an institution, are receiving increased scrutiny (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Webster & Showers, 2011).

1.1.4 Contextual Background

Mbale District is located in Eastern Uganda bordered by Tororo district in the south, Manafwa district in the South East, Bududa district in the North East, Sironko and Bukedea districts in the North, Kibuku and Budaka districts in the North West, and Butaleja district in the South West. There are over 20 secondary schools that have been implementing the USE programme and out of these, 10(both private and government-aided) were chosen for this study. Mbale district education officials, both at the district and secondary levels, are critical to the achievement of their mission which is: to provide all services that facilitate the academic achievements for all school-going children and retaining them in school. The district education office has been working hand in hand with the government to establish schools and provide teachers but there is limited support offered by the parents to fully realize this cause as quoted in the monitor publication of Sunday, November 11, 2014, p.3 whereby the LC5 secretary for Education of Mbale district was saying that strict measures shall be taken against those parents who shy away from their responsibilities by not feeding and providing basic scholastic requirements for their children at school. In 2012, 2013 and 2014; the total enrolment in USE schools increased by 9.04% from 689,541 to 751,867, 7.3%. from 751,867 to 806,992 and 8.2% from 806,992 to 873,476 respectively as highlighted in the MoES sector annual performance report for financial year 2013/2014. From this secondary school enrollment, whereas the number of S1 students in 2012 in Mbale district alone was 9,400, the number of S2-S4 students decreased by 10-25% and the number of S4 students was 7,200, falling to around 76% of the number of S1 students (Mbale District Education report, 2015). One wonders where the 24% went and why?

Mafabi (2004) stresses that parents play and determine to a very great extent student retention and overall success of their children. But in Mbale district parents seem to differ from that. Their children's education is a no bother to them as long as the government has put Universal Secondary Education for them. The parents shy away from their responsibilities of paying supplementary fees, having a two-way communication between home and school regularly, being full partners in decision making that influence their children's retention in school, contributing towards buying school needs like scholastic

materials, uniform, and attending school meetings, among others. So, without suitable and ample support from the parents, retaining students can be a difficult task (Mbale District Education report, 2014). Mbale is endowed with USE schools which offer a place for every child to have an opportunity to have good education that will lead him or her to a higher level of education in life but this is becoming a problem because of less parental involvement hence low student retention and achievement. It's against this background that the researcher is compelled to carry out research on the relationship between parents' involvement and student retention in Universal Secondary Education Schools in Mbale district.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to Asikhia (2010), student retention is largely dependent on parental involvement, which includes provision of school needs, payment of supplementary fees and participation in school meetings. However, student retention in most USE schools in Mbale District is low. For instance, in 2012, whereas the number of S1 students in Mbale district alone was 9,400, the number of S2-S4 students decreased by 10-25% and the number of S4 students was 7,200 (Mbale District Education report, 2015). In addition, USE schools in mbale district have continued to register high student dropout rates over the last seven years as evidenced by the USE head-count report (2013), with an average dropout rate of 26% in 2012 and 2013. This kind of scenario may be as a result of limited parental involvement in the education of their children? It was against this background that the researcher set out to establish the relationship between parents' involvement and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale District.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between parental involvement and students' retention rate in Universal Secondary Education schools, taking a case study of Mbale District.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study strived to achieve the following objectives:

1. To establish the relationship between parents' provision of school needs and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district.
2. To establish the relationship between parents' payment of supplementary fees and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district.
3. To establish the relationship between parents' participation in school meetings and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district.

1.5 Research Questions

The study wished to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between parents' provision of school needs and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district?
2. What is the relationship between parents' payment of supplementary fees and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district?
3. What is the relationship between parents' participation in school meetings and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

The study tested the following alternative hypotheses:

H1- There is a significant relationship between parental involvement and students' retention rate in Universal secondary education schools in Mbale District.

H2- There is a significant relationship between parents' provision of school needs and students' retention rate in Universal secondary education schools in Mbale District.

H3- There is a significant relationship between parents' payment of supplementary fees and student s' retention rate in Universal secondary education schools in Mbale District

H4- There is a significant relationship between parents' participation in school meetings and students' retention rate in Universal secondary education schools in Mbale District.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Content scope

The study concentrated on dimensions of parents' involvement (provision of school needs, supplementary fees and participation in school meetings) and how they related with students' retention rate.

Geographical scope

The study was carried out in Universal Secondary Schools in Mbale District. The study, due to limited time and financial resources, targeted 12 schools (6 Private partnership and 6 government) which are implementing the USE programme (Mbale District Education statistical report, 2015). The choice of this study area was attributed to the fact that there has been low student retention since the inception of Universal Secondary Education in Mbale District.

Time scope

The study covered the period of four years, that is, 2012-2015 due to rampant decline in student retention in USE schools, in particular, Mbale District. This is supported by the USE head count reports of 2013-2015. Also, this period was considered in order to assess students' completion rate after a period of 4 years of operation.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The study may be useful in the following ways:

To the management of USE schools, the study would help in providing empirical evidence on how parents' involvement relates with student retention in their schools and providing the necessary interventions for involving parents to achieve the desired goals and objectives of both the USE programme and their schools.

To the MoES officials and district education officials, the results of this study may also provide suggestions to policy makers at the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and district education officials in Uganda to come up with interventions that will promote parental involvement and enhance student retention in schools.

To head teachers, the study may provide suggestions to promote parents' involvement by including and informing parents of school activities, projects, and co-curricular activities, and seek their input and guidance in educational decisions about their children.

To teachers, they may use the findings to involve parents and ensure that their children complete secondary education and proceed onto higher institutions of learning for professional courses in larger numbers.

To parents and students, the study may inform them about the importance of parental involvement in enhancing student retention and hence help parents love and respect their responsibilities all of which may lead to high retention of their children in school.

To the academia, the study may add new knowledge on the relationship between parental involvement and student retention thereby helping to fill in some gaps that previous similar studies have left, and contribute to relevant information, thus acting as a source of reference for future researchers.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

This is the diagrammatic representation of the relationship between the variables under this study and how they have been operationalized for purposes of this research endeavor.

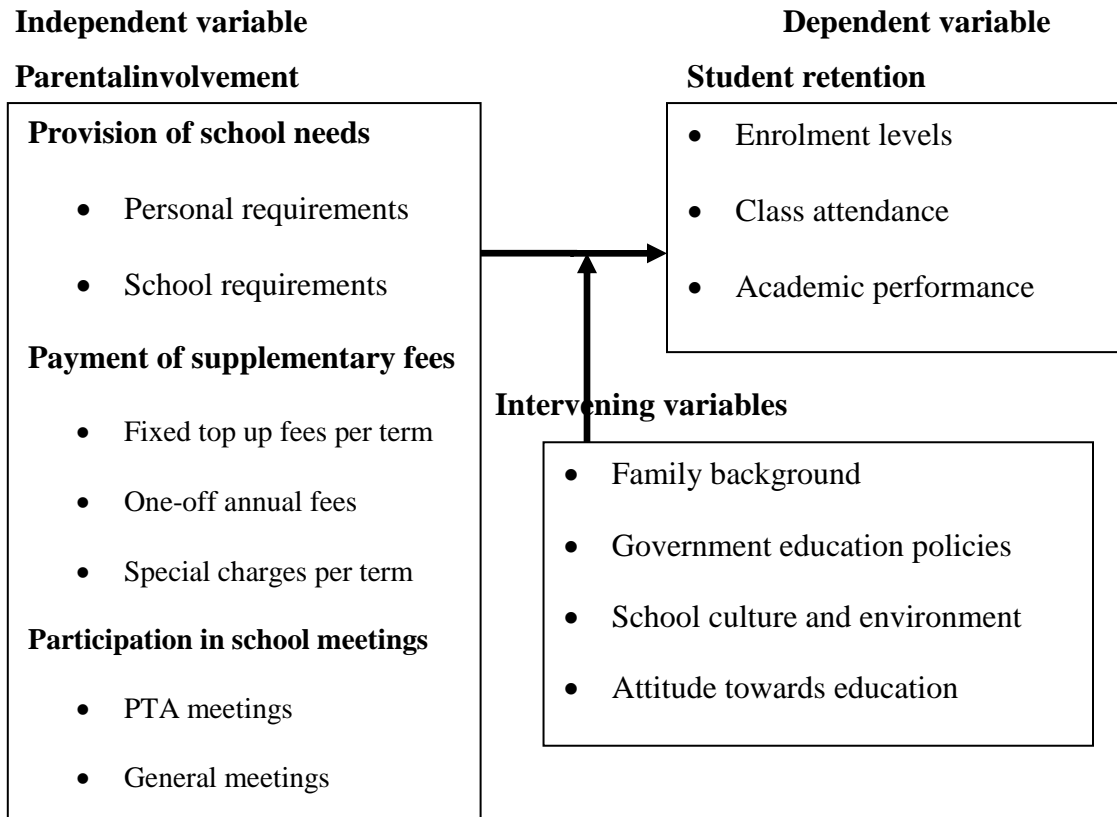


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework showing the relationship between the Independent Variable and the Dependent Variable

Source: Adopted and modified from Epstein (1995) theory

The model above illustrates how the different parameters of parents' involvement (provision of school needs, payment of supplementary fees and participation in school meetings) relate with the dependent variable (student retention). It also shows that there are intervening variables such as family background, government education policies, school culture, and attitude towards education which are assumed to influence both the independent and dependent variables. Epstein (1992) parental involvement frame work will direct the study variables by the assertion that the overlapping spheres of influence which focus on the complex interrelationships of family and school affect students' wellbeing and retention in school. The frame work shows that the parents' involvement in creating surroundings that support- their children, fathomed the child's retention in school; the parents have to assist their children's schooling by paying fees, assisting their

children with their homework in regard to materials used in the school programs and attending meetings or volunteering. However, parental involvement is not the only factor that leads to student retention. This kind of scenario is attributable to intervening variables. All these would eventually affect student retention.

1.10 Justification of the Study

The issue of parents' involvement and student retention is not widely researched on and therefore there's a knowledge gap, thus justifying the study.

Theoretically, this study has added new knowledge to the already existing body of knowledge as regards parents' involvement and student retention in USE schools in Uganda.

Since the USE policy is relatively new in Uganda, not many surveys or researches have been done to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the policy and how parents are involved, thus justifying this study.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms and Concepts

Parental involvement in this study refers to parents' obligation and initiative made as part of their responsibility to pay supplementary fees, provide school needs for their children and attend school meetings which is likely to influence their children's retention in school.

Student retention is used in this study to mean enrolled students who study full time and complete the lower secondary education cycle as per the USE programme.

Supplementary fees. This is part of the fees a parent has to pay every term as agreed between the PTAs and school authorities. The fee helps the school administration to offset the shortfall in the school budget which the government grant cannot meet. So, parents can participate by paying the facilitation fee on time so as to boost teaching in schools.

Scholastic material. According to Kalule John (2006) scholastic materials are those materials that facilitate and supplement the teaching and learning activities. Babirye

(2006) noted that parents can still participate by enhancing the implementation of the school curriculum in a way of contributing towards scholastic materials.

Enrolment. This refers to a process through which children join secondary schools.

Academic performance. Is the total level of pass or failure of students over a period of time which could be at the end of lesson, day, week, month, term, session, or level of education in various school subjects?

School needs Means children's personal requirements like clothing, food and medical care or school requirements like uniform and scholastic materials

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Mugenda & Mugenda (1999) contend that literature review involves the systematic identification, location and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem under investigation. Therefore, this chapter presents a review of related literature on parental involvement (provision of school needs, payment of supplementary fees and participation in school meetings) and how they relate with student retention in school world over based on scholars' views, opinions and findings from journal articles, empirical research with a view of throwing more light on the study variables, their relationships and identifying the literature gaps. The first section gives the theoretical and conceptual review. This is followed by a review of related literature in line with the objectives of the study.

The sources of literature review were the secondary information from books, relevant journals, reports, documentary reviews, newspapers, magazines, internet and past dissertations; primary information from questionnaires and interview guides. Some guesses and lessons identified by previous researchers were analysed.

2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Theoretical Review

The term theory can be used to signify an opinion or speculation, not necessarily based on fact nor true description of reality. The function of theory is therefore to guide researchers in understanding and predicting behaviour or phenomenon through study findings. A theory is a hypothesis that has to be proved or disproved.

This study is underpinned by Epstein's theory of parental involvement. It recognizes that there are some duties that parents and schools conduct separately and some are conducted jointly towards their shared goal of maximizing children's outcomes (Epstein, 1992). While theorists and researchers have moved towards such a conceptualization of parental

involvement, seeking children`s education as the shared responsibility of families and schools, there is also evidence that in practice, a deficit approach still pervades in some contexts (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). Moore and Lasky (2001) argue that ‘deficit approaches to parental involvement are still alive and well when it comes to inclusion of minority, single parent and low socio economic status families. Epstein & Sanders (2006) expressed concern that early work on parental involvement neglected to offer insights about what schools could do to promote more extensive parental involvement. Dietz (2007) argued that when a school limits parental involvement (e.g. fundraising, committee membership), then only a small proportion of parents become involved. As a result, the school neither really involves parents nor reaps the potential benefits from parents’ involvement. Instead, a more comprehensive model of parental involvement which elicits a wide variety of parental involvement is advocated (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Epstein and colleagues (Epstein, 1992) thus developed a typology which aimed to comprehensively categorize the variety of involvement activities in which parents could potentially engage.

According to Epstein theory, parental involvement can be categorized into home based involvement, school-based involvement and home-school communication (Fantuzzo, et al., 2000). Parenting refers to parents’ basic obligations towards their children, such as providing them with guidance, supervision and materials; communicating refers to sharing knowledge between home and school for example about the child’s progress; volunteering means parental involvement in school activities such as helping in the classroom, attending school occasions, meetings ,learning at home activities such as helping in homework, talking to the child about school and learning, providing encouragement etc. decision making means involvement in organization or planning in the school, such as on parents` associations or councils, collaborating with parents within the same community, community working together and exchanging information in the best interests of the children

From this theoretical background, it is apparent that, in a school setting, parents might willingly provide school needs, pay supplementary fees and attend school meetings while

others might not. Epstein (1992) stated that the overlapping spheres of influence which focus on the complex interrelationships of family and school affect student's wellbeing, academic performance and retention. The ultimate influence on student retention is willful parental involvement in students' academics that can yield good results. This theory also implies that if parents willingly partnered with the school administration, by establishing a home environment that supports children as students, good communication about school programs and children's progress; participate in decision making, volunteer to provide the necessities that fathom the students' academics, then there would be high student retention.

The parameters under parental involvement were considered to be factors influencing student retention in USE schools. However, it must also be acknowledged that the presence of other factors under the intervening variable could also have influence on student retention.

2.1.2 Conceptual Review

Parental involvement in the lives of their children is seen as an important factor for the good development of a child and retention in school according to Gutman and McLoyd (2010) and Desforges (2013). They say that involvement of parents affects the shape of a child's environment and can partly determine the development of cognitive skills of children. Education is often part of the life of a child and therefore parental involvement in education is important too. Desforges (2013) highlights that there are many factors influencing the achieved results of children in school and that parental involvement is one of those factors. There are consistent outcomes from different researchers of the positive impact of parental involvement on children. This implies that these results are reliable (Heller, 2013). Positive effects concern cognitive, social, emotional and academic growth in children (Graham, 2005; Colombo, 2004; Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005). Cognitive growth is visible through improved school achievements. Social growth is visible through relations with teachers and other pupils; their social competence is improved. Emotional growth is due to increased positive experiences of children, on cognitive and social

spheres. Academic growth is visible through higher aspirations in undertaking further education and less truancy behaviour of children.

Student retention is a major indicator of student and school success within the secondary education community (Braxton, Hirschy & McClendon, 2014; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2010; Webster & Showers, 2011). The majority of students come to school with the goal of obtaining a school certificate. Schools with high retention rates are perceived as providing students with the resources, services and support systems needed to successfully obtain a certificate other than parents' involvement. However, higher student retention rates, considered to have a greater impact on the financial standing and reputation of a school, are receiving increased scrutiny (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Webster & Showers, 2011).

Student retention is the opposite of student drop out. Mathematically, the two add up to 100%, implying that one affects the other. It is clear that the number of children enrolled in school has increased over time. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of are dropping out before completing both primary and secondary cycles. There are many factors associated with drop out, some of which belong to the individual, such as poor health or malnutrition and motivation. Others emerge from household situations such as child labour and poverty. School level factors also play a role in increasing pressures to drop out such as absenteeism, school location and poor quality educational provision. Therefore, both demand and supply driven factors are embedded in cultural and contextual realities which make each circumstance different. Nevertheless, it is possible to make general points about the causes of drop out.

First, there is no single cause of drop out. Drop out is often a process rather than the result of a single event, and therefore has more than one proximate cause (Hunt, 2008). Second, poverty appears to influence the demand for schooling, not only because it affects the inability of households to pay school fees and other related costs associated with education, but also because it is associated with a high opportunity cost for schooling for children. As children grow older, the opportunity cost of education is even

larger, hence increasing the pressure for children to work and even earn income for the household as opposed to spending time in education.

Third, distance to schools, poor quality of classrooms, inappropriate language of instruction, teacher absenteeism and, in the case of girls' school safety, are common causes of school dropout (Colclough, et al, 2000). These are seen as supply side the causes of dropout, mainly driven at the school level.

Poverty also interacts with other points of social disadvantage, with the interaction of factors putting further pressure on vulnerable and marginalized children to drop out.

The following is the table showing the USE survival rate according to the National USE/UPPET and UPOLET Headcount Report-2015

USE Survival rate 2015				
	2012	2013	2014	2015
Male	79%	75%	76%	76%
Female	73%	69%	70%	73%
Total	76%	72%	73%	74%

The USE survival rate slightly improved in 2015 with 74% from 73% in 2014. This indicator to the USE cohort, that is; USE students who started S1 in 2012 and managed to make it to S4 in 2015. The remaining 26% of students either repeated a class, transferred to non-USE schools or else dropped out of school.

According to the headcount report, possible reasons for the loss of students are

(a) Primary reasons:

- i. Repetition; some students are stopped or prevented from proceeding to the next class by their teachers following anticipated poor performance especially in

national examinations. It is also important to note that students who repeat cease to be eligible, hence elimination from the program.

- ii. Foreigners; some foreigners especially Sudanese who had encroached on the UPPET program are being discouraged. This trend has been experienced in the districts neighboring Sudan.
- iii. Early pregnancies; pregnancy is also cited as the reason for the high school drop out of the female students more especially in the Northern and North Eastern regions.
- iv. Discontinuing schools; some schools that were previously part of the USE/UPPET program have opted out and some have been reported closed. These schools leave the school system and USE/UPPET program with their students and this affects the USE/UPPET cohort.

(b) Secondary reasons:

- i. Inadequate infrastructure such as limited class rooms, laboratories and libraries in some schools has made parents to opt for non-USE schools with better infrastructure.
- ii. Inadequate/ lack of science equipment and facilities in some schools which makes students/ parents to opt for schools with practical learning.
- iii. Lack of enough teachers in some USE schools to enable effective teaching and learning especially in the rural areas.

Effective participation of parents, though very important, was not mentioned in the USE headcount report as one of the possible reasons responsible for student loss.

2.2 Provision of School needs and Student Retention

School needs means children's needs provided by parents other than supplementary fees. They are either personal requirements like clothing, meals and medical care or school requirements like uniform and scholastic materials. Participation of parents, though very

important, in the USE program is still limited. According to the USE guidelines (MOES, 2008), parents are responsible for providing school needs for their children. These needs include clothing, meals, scholastic materials and medical care apart from school requirements like uniform, and stationery. The USE policy may be pro-poor but to an impoverished family, these needs may carry serious financial implications which can lead to a child's failure to continue with school. So, even though under USE secondary education is in theory free, parents still have to part with a lot of money for uniform(including shoes), scholastic materials, food, and transport. Therefore, the current study will establish the relationship between parents' provision of school needs and student retention in USE schools in Mbale District.

Parental participation is a contribution of resources, materials and labor towards school activities. Babirye (2006) noted that parents can still participate by enhancing the implementation of the school curriculum in a way of contributing towards scholastic materials. Being a serious need for students' good academic performance, it was cited in the monitor publication (Sunday November 11, 2014,p.3) that the LC5 Secretary for Education for Mbale District said that strict measures shall be taken against those parents who shy away from their responsibilities by not feeding and providing basic scholastic requirements for their children at school. This is an indication that parents' role of providing school needs to their children is very minimal.

In Uganda, the Education Act, 2008 shows that parents' responsibilities, among others, include provision of learning materials, infrastructural development and caring for children; this enhances retention of students in school. Most students who are high achievers are well equipped with necessary learning materials as provided by parents. Several researchers observe that the availability of reading materials at home is directly associated with children's achievement in reading comprehension. The absence of basic resources, for example reading materials, teachers, and high quality instruction will place a child at risk (Republic of Uganda, 1992), hence dropping or demanding for change of school.

According to Kaggwa (2003) scholastic materials facilitate and supplement teaching and learning activities. He further argued that from his teaching experience, they promote retention of students in schools. He further said that scholastic materials bring about students' involvement in learning and later affect academic performance.

Lukendo (2011) in her research study titled 'Parents' contribution and the retention of pupils at primary level of education in Bubulo East County, Uganda" contends that provision of scholastic materials by parent's impact on children's performance in examinations. She further argues that children whose parents provide enough exercise books, pens, pencils, mathematical sets are encouraged to do the given class exercises, to practice drawing and construction of polygons compared to children who lack the basic scholastic materials. Children who lack the basic scholastic materials either don't try the given exercises or absentee themselves from school.

Usman (2014) in his study about parental involvement and students' completion rate in public day and boarding primary school in Nakaloke town council, Uganda, argues that parents' provision of basic needs to their children at school affects their completion rate. He contends that some parents did not provide basic needs like functional fees; scholastic materials such as files and lunch for their children. Failure to provide such basic needs was probably related to lack of morale and encouragement from the parents and thus low retention.

Nyamusana (2010) who denoted that the benefits of parental involvement in academic issues have not been realized in many of the schools, which has seen the effect of impinging on students' retention. The finding that there is no significant relationship between parental involvement and student retention rate is apparently attributable to the fact that for both the poor and better performing students, parents were involved in the management of their discipline and, indeed, student discipline was reported to be good.

2.3 Payment of Supplementary fees and Student Retention

A school fee is a child's facilitation in pursuing his or her studies and this is a major requirement if the child is going to sit comfortably in class without disturbances. Many

students who might have done this nation proud in different fields have been forced into uninspired careers due to unavailability of financial resources. Such individuals are forced out of school and made to engage in hawking, selling packaged drinking water and the likes so as to save money for their school expenses. It is believed that low social economic status negatively affects academic achievement because low social economic status prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home (Eamon 2005). Most of the time, they cannot afford instructional materials, and are always at the mercy of examiners during examination period. The persistence of this in the life of an individual student may spell doom for his academic success. However, Griffith (2006) reports that socio-economically disadvantaged parents usually lack skills, abilities and reading materials at home; this is directly associated with children's achievement in reading comprehension. The absence of basic resources, for example reading materials, teachers, and high quality instruction will place a child at risk (Republic of Uganda, 1992).

In a study carried out by Feyfant and Rey (2014) in Scottish schools, it was concluded that for more than 10 years then, parents' role in school was the main factor responsible for 'retaining students in school'. This prompted the researcher to find out the extent to which retention may be attributed to parents' involvement in academic issues of their children.

In another study carried out by Cotton and Wikelund (2006), parents' involvement in students' schooling created effectiveness in fostering students' achievement and retention. Aspects considered were; helping students in home work, helping students in making post-secondary plans, behavioral improvement, home school communication and parent- school agreement on reward. However, the study shows no clear evidence of a causal relationship between parents' involvement in children's discipline management and academic performance.

In Uganda the Government Education White Paper (1992) makes it clear that PTAs should continue functioning as voluntary organizations that are mainly concerned with both students' and teachers' welfare and the overall development of the school. This may

be done through paying school fees in time, fundraising for schools, donating, and participating in the planning for the allocation of these resources. According to Nyamusana (2010), with or without USE, parents need to let their children go to school on time and provide them with necessary facilitation, otherwise students whose parents don't conform to that have always been sent home for lack of school fees hence missing classes and exams. Ssonko (2001), noted that even if the teachers and students are very good, the absence of financial resources and subsequent inadequacies of scholastic materials could impinge student retention. Students entering the middle grades in high-poverty neighborhoods are more likely than in the primary grades to experience chaotic, under resourced classrooms and schools. Many of these students conclude that not much productivity is going on in these schools (Wilson & Corbett, 2001).

Under the voucher system, families can choose to send their children to free subsidized schools, either municipal or private, or they can choose fee-paying private schools if they can afford the tuition fees (Mizala & Romaguera 2000). The researcher agrees that financial support from parents in form of supplementary fees and timely payment of school fees contribute significantly to student retention. This is in addition to provision of the necessary teaching and learning facilities in time and motivation of teachers among others, which are essential ingredients for the effective teaching and learning process.

This is provided for in the Uganda government education white paper (1992) which makes it clear that PTAs should continue functioning as voluntary organizations for teachers and students' welfare among other functions, hence enhancing the retention levels of the students.

Even if young people pass PLE and are eligible for a secondary school place, they may still not manage to register. Government schools receive 41,000/= (\$11) per student per term under the USE scheme, while private schools receive 47,000/= (\$12) per student per term. It is estimated that secondary spend around 120,000/=(\$33) per student per term, leaving a significant shortfall. So, even though under USE Secondary Education is in theory free, parents still have to part away with a lot of money in form of development or supplementary fees (or whatever euphuism the school chooses to use). These fees should

not be enforced to deny a child an education, although this happens. They are used paying teachers' housing and school resources and accommodation. Even in poor rural areas such additional can be 60,000/=($\$17$) per student per term. The government has just given schools the right to raise basic and supplementary fees because of high inflation. Many parents will be unable to pay. Girls, in particular, are likely to miss out. (Molyneaux, Kritan, April, 2012).

2.4 Participation in School Meetings and Student Retention

Catsambis (2011) coupled with other researchers whose findings pointed out a lot; that though in some areas parents report a serious lack of communication from schools and the families, they themselves contact the schools infrequently hence affecting the student's retention levels negatively.

Balli et al. (2008) discusses that parents take interest in the activities of children at school and visit schools to gather information. As they construed it, their parental roles involved active monitoring or "keeping on top of" children's progress, they also saw themselves as responsible for intervening in school decisions to boost student retention levels at school.

Parental absence from meetings has been highlighted as a major cause for poor student's retention levels. Some parents call them as a waste of time. However, Eamon (2005) emphasized the coming to meetings, or coming to parent-teacher conferences as a way of parents' involvement in children's education assessment which can boost student's retention. Family practices of involvement are as or more important than family background variables in determining whether and how students' progress and succeed in school (Epstein, 2004).

However, Chan and Chui, (2007) disagreed when they stated that elsewhere, teachers have been found to have some reservations about parents' capability in taking their partnership responsibilities. It was further discovered that principals do not ask parents to participate in decision-making meetings because they are perceived not to have confidence in policy issues, in return, the students end up victims of circumstances when they abandon school or shift to another school.

2.5 Summary of literature review

The literature reviewed provided diverse experiences on the perceptions of parents' involvement and student retention but falls short of providing empirical evidence on the relationship between parents' involvement and student retention in Universal Secondary Schools in Mbale district. Although it is believed by some people that some parents' failure to meet their children's school needs, supplementary fees and attending school meetings is responsible for the low retention rate in USE schools, the significance of its effect is not clear; it is this clarification that the researcher seeks to establish by conducting a case study in Mbale district USE schools.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the study design, population of study, sampling method and sample size, data collection methods and instruments. The reliability and validity of the study instruments, data management and presentation follow this.

3.1 Research Design

According to Kombo and Tromp (2009) a research design is the glue that holds all the elements in a research together.

A cross sectional survey design was used in the study based on both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, because according to Kotharin (2004) cross sectional research describes an existing relationship between variables. It is also encouraged by Amin (2005) for studies that involve collecting data from a large population. This design is appropriate because it involves analysis of respondents across a wide spectrum; a cross-sectional survey design acts as the best design to decipher the required study findings and also use of qualitative methods helps one yield more information (Vessels &Huitt, 2005).

Both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data was obtained using questionnaires and interview guides. On the other hand, secondary data was obtained using internet, journals, books, reports and newspapers.

The study flowed sequentially, beginning with questionnaires that were backed up by interviews. Quantitative approach was used because of the variables that were measured by numbers and analyzed with statistical procedures (Amin, 2005; Airat, 2014).

3.2 Population of Study

A population may be a complete collection of all objects or people, students, cars, animals, books schools under investigation.

The study targeted a population of 12 secondary schools which have been implementing the USE programme in Mbale District and included 12 head teachers, 180 teachers, 55 student leaders, 12 BOG representatives and 12 PTA executive representatives making a total of 271 subjects. The targeted groups were chosen because they were appropriate for providing reliable information on the various dimensions of the study.

3.2.1 Sample Size

The table developed by Krejcie and Morgan in 1970 (Amin, 2005) for determining sample size (Appendix D) was used by the researcher to determine sample size. The number of subjects from each category of respondents was determined using this table.

The sample size was 196 respondents based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling guidelines. Table1 below shows the summary of the sample size of the respondents and the sampling approaches which were used in the study.

Table 1: Sample size of the respondents

Population category	Access population	Sample size	Sampling techniques
Head teachers	12	10	Purposive sampling
Boards of Governors representatives	12	10	Purposive sampling
PTAs representatives	12	10	Purposive sampling
Teachers	180	118	Simple random sampling
Students	55	48	Purposive sampling
Total	271	196	

Source: Adopted from Krejcie and Morgan (1970), modified by the researcher (2015)

3.2.2 Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques refer to the procedure a researcher uses to select the needed study sample (Amin, 2005). The researcher employed simple random sampling and purposive sampling. The simple random sampling refers to a process of selecting a sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected, that is, a sample obtained from the population without bias. This would produce representative samples of the teachers' population which are homogenous with respect to the characteristics of interest. Teachers' names were captured and written on pieces of paper which were folded, put in a container, and mixed up. A folded paper at a time was picked at random without replacement and this was included in a sample till the required number was reached. Purposive sampling is selecting the respondents of the study for a particular purpose. This was therefore used to select 48 student leaders, 10 head teachers, 10 BOGs and 10 PTAs.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The researcher ensured that both qualitative and quantitative data was collected using survey method. For the qualitative data, the collection methods involved mainly interviews while for the quantitative data, a questionnaire was used.

3.3.1 Questionnaire survey

A set of questionnaires written on paper were administered to the respondents to get information from the respondents concerning the study. They were administered to respondents who could read and write; the respondents possessed the information to answer the questions or items and willingly answered the questions honestly and it was thought to be less expensive for data collection (Amin, 2005). The respondents recorded their answers within closely defined and provided alternatives. The questionnaires were administered by personally delivering them to teachers and students within the selected USE schools in Mbale District.

3.3.2 Interviewing guide

The interview method was employed to generate qualitative data using an interview guide. The information obtained was used to support the quantitatively generated data.

In this method, on appointment, the researcher interviewed respondents (BOG and PTA representatives) face to face to obtain in-depth information on parents' involvement and student retention. The interviews were structured to comprise a set of question items on which the researcher wished to draw data from the respondents.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

In this study, data was collected mainly through self-administered questionnaires and interview guides. The questionnaires were applied to headteachers, teachers, and student leaders. The interview guide was particularly meant for collecting data from BOG and PTA representatives.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

A uniform self-administered open and close-ended questionnaire encompassing background information, provision of school needs, payment of supplementary fees, participation in school meetings and student retention was used. The questionnaire was scored on a Likert scale ranging from (5) for strongly agree (4) for agree, (3) for not sure (2) for disagree (1) for strongly disagree (Ahuja, 2005). Scaled questionnaires eased the process of quantitative data analysis. This instrument was used to collect quantitative data from the teachers, head teachers and student leaders because they read, analyse, write and spare time to fill the questionnaires. Questionnaires were useful because they covered a large number of respondents in a short period of time and generated reliable data since the respondents answered the questions in their own mood without being influenced by the researcher's presence (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999).

3.4.2 Interview guide

Interviews with the target respondents were conducted using the interview guide by meeting the respondents and asking them questions for which the researcher recorded all the responses by himself (Airat, 2014). An interview guide was used because it gives immediate feedback and allows adequate proofing.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Study Instrument

This subsection looks at the quality control of the instruments that were used in the study. According to Amin (2005), validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures

what it is supposed to measure while reliability is the extent to which a study instrument consistently measures what it is supposed to measure.

3.5.1 Validity of the Study Instrument

The relevance of the questions used to measure variables and validity of the instrument were tested using the Content Validity Index (CVI). This involved judges scoring the relevance of the questions in the instruments in relation to the study variables and a consensus judgment given on each variable was accorded. The CVI was measured using the formula: $CVI = \frac{\text{Agreed items by judges as suitable}}{\text{Total number of items}} = \frac{13}{15} = 0.866$

Total number of items being judged 15

For the instrument to be accepted as valid, average index should be 0.7 or above (Amin, 2005). Therefore, since the computed value was 0.866 which was greater than 0.7, the instrument was considered valid.

3.5.2 Reliability of the Study Instruments

The internal consistence and reliability of the instruments was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient taking only variables with a high alpha coefficient accepted for social science research (Amin, 2005). Reliability is expressed numerically, usually as a reliability coefficient ranging between 0.00-1.00. A pilot study using 10% of the sample size in a different district (Pallisa district) was carried out. Using the results of the study, the reliability of each instrument was computed using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. According to Amin (2005), for an instrument to be accepted as reliable, its Cronbach Alpha coefficient must be greater than 0.5.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	No. of Items
.747	15

Source: Primary data (2016)

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

A letter of introduction was secured from UMI allowing me to proceed to the field for purposes of conducting the research. Using the same letter, written permission was also secured from the District Education Officer, Mbale District, to allow me proceed to selected USE schools for data collection for the research.

It is both the cover letters from Uganda Management Institute and the DEO that were attached to the questionnaires (Sekaran, 2003) which were also used for introductory purposes to the selected USE schools for the research endeavour. The questionnaires were physically delivered to the target respondents and collected after 1 week. They were then sorted, edited, coded and entered into SPSS for analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis

The term analysis (processing for some researchers) involves a number of closely related operations, which are performed with the purpose of summarizing the data and organizing these in such a manner that they answer the research question(s) or hypotheses if they exist (Amin, 2005). Thus in the process of analysis, relationships or differences supporting or conflicting with original or new hypotheses should be subjected to statistical tests of significance to determine if real differences exist.

3.7.1 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using mean, Pearson Correlation product moment and regression with the help of the SPSS computer package. Mean was used to show the level of agreement and disagreement among responses, Pearson Correlation product moment was used to establish the relationship between two variables and regression was used to ascertain the overall relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

3.7.2 Qualitative Analysis

The researcher analyzed the work basing on descriptions made by the respondents. Qualitative data analysis was presented in a narrative form on the different questions posed to the respondents. The data from interviews of key informants and from open-ended questions were analyzed by listing down all respondents' views under each question or category. The tally mark method was then used to group similar views

expressed by more than one respondent. Tables were constructed from the totals of tally marks. Then the researcher organized statements and responses to generate useful conclusions and interpretations on the research objectives (Sekaran, 2003).

3.8 Measurement of Variables

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), measurement of variables gives the researcher information regarding the extent of individual differences on a given variable.

The variables were measured by operationally defining concepts. For instance, the questionnaire was designed to get perceptions and views about parents' involvement and student retention in USE schools in Mbale District. These were then channeled into scaled and measurable elements for the development of an index of the concept. A five-Likert scale namely: (5) for strongly agree, (4) for agree, (3) for neutral, (2) for disagree and (1) for strongly disagree was used to measure both the independent and dependent variables. The characteristics of the respondents were measured at both nominal and ordinal scales (Kotharin, 2004).

3.9 Ethical Consideration

A rapport was created as a building block for openness and respondents' participation.

Ethical issues were taken into consideration whereby respondents were assured of the confidentiality, the permission to share with the respondents was first sought, community norms and values were respected and every respondent was treated the way they came.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes and interprets the study results on the relationship between parental involvement and students' retention in Universal Secondary Education schools, taking a case study of Mbale District. The first section presents the response rate which is followed by background information about the respondents. A presentation and analysis of the study of empirical findings in relation to student retention, the relationship between: parents' provision of school needs and student retention, parents' payment of supplementary fees and student retention and parents' participation in school meetings and student retention, and a summary is then made in this chapter.

4.1 Response rate

This study had a sample size of 196 respondents involving 10 head teachers/deputy head teachers, 10 BOGs representatives, 10 PTAs representatives, 118 teachers and 48 student leaders. The overall response rates were as shown in Table 3

Table 3: Response rate per category of respondents

Source: Primary data (2016)

Table 3 revealed that in relative terms, all respondents were represented in the study.

Category	Intended	Attained	Percentage attained
Head teachers/deputy	10	10	100.0
BOG representatives	10	8	80.0
PTAs representatives	10	7	70.0
Teachers	118	95	80.5
Student leaders	48	47	97.9
Overall	196	167	85.2

Head teachers/deputies were well represented with 100% response rate, followed by student leaders with 97.9%, teachers with 80.5%, BOGs representatives with 80.0%, and PTAs representatives with 70.0%. Overall, the study achieved a response rate of over 85%. According to Amin (2005) 85.2 is representative enough of the population from which it was selected.

4.2 Background information about the respondents

The background information of the respondents comprise gender, age group, working experience and level of education, as indicated by the respondents on the study questionnaire.

Table 3: Gender of the respondents

Gender	Student leaders		Teachers		Head teachers/deputies	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Male	32	68.1	60	63.2	7	70.0
Female	15	31.9	35	36.8	3	30.0
Total	47	100.0	95	100.0	10	100.0

Source: Primary data (2016)

Table 4 above shows that there were more male than female respondents who responded to this study. As per the presentation, majority of the student leaders were male (32-68.1%), compared to 15 (31.9%) females. Still, male teachers dominated the sample by contributing 60 (63.2%) of the respondents compared to 35 (36.8%) females. Further, male head teachers/deputies dominated the sample by contributing to almost three quarters of the respondents, that is 7 (70.0%) compared to 3(30%) females. However, in terms of the study at least both Males and Females were involved though males outnumbered their counterparts. The males were more because their enrolment is more in secondary teachers colleges, tend to be more flexible in their homes than the females, most female teachers opt to teach in primary schools than secondary.

Table 4: Age of respondents

Age	Teachers		Head teachers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
20-30 years	23	24.2	0	0.0
31-40 years	55	57.9	2	20.0
41-50 years	17	17.9	8	80.0
Total	95	100	10	100.0

Source: Primary data (2016)

Table 5 above shows teachers' and head teachers'/deputy head teachers' age bracket. Majority of the teachers, 55 (57.9%) were between 31-40 years, 23 (24.2%) between 20-30 years, while 17 (17.9%) were between 41-50 years. More than three quarters of the head teachers/deputies who participated in the study were between 41-50 years as this was shown by 8 (80.0%) response rates. This implies that the teachers were mature enough to deal with the student activities. Also, the head teachers were mature enough and had reasonable experience (see table) to deal with management and leadership issues, hence reliable in providing the required information as regards the study under investigation.

Table 5: Working experience of the respondents

Work period	Teachers		Head teachers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1-5 years	24	25.3	0	0.0
6-10 years	51	53.6	1	10.0
10-14 years	11	11.6	3	30.0
15 and beyond	9	9.5	6	60.0
Total	95	100.0	10	100.0

Source: Primary data (2016)

The head teachers/deputies were asked to state the duration that they had served in the capacity of school heads in their respective schools. The responses tabulated above show that more than half (6)-60.0% of the Head teachers/deputies had served in the capacity of school head for 15 years and beyond, followed by 3 (30.0%) who had served as heads for 10-14 years and only 1 (10.0%) had served as a head teacher/deputy for a period between 6-10 years and none of them had served for less than 9 years.

The teachers, on the other hand, were also asked to state the duration they had been working as teachers in their respective schools. As shown in the presentation, majority 51 (53.6%) had been teaching in their respective schools for 6-10 years, 24 (25.3%) had a working experience of 1-5 years, 11 (11.6%) had worked for 10-14 years while 9 (9.5%) had been teaching for 15 years and beyond.

This shows that majority of the head teachers/deputies and teachers were old in this capacity as they had served for relatively a long period of time thus well-endowed with experience and ideas related to parental involvement and student retention. The time worked with the school could serve as basis for perceptions of student retention and need for improvement and coercing of parents to participate in the academic affairs of their

children. Most schools retire or transfer, those not performing and recruit new ones whose working experience period is small.

Table 6: Highest level of education of the respondents (teachers and head teachers)

Highest level of education	Teachers		Head teachers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Post graduate	14	14.7	4	40.0
Graduate	32	33.7	6	60.0
Diploma	49	51.6	0	0.0
Total	95	100.0	10	100.0

Source: Primary data (2016)

Table 7 above shows the highest level of education of the teachers and head teachers. Majority of the teachers were diploma holders (49)-51.6%, compared to 32 (33.7% graduates, while 14(14.7%) were postgraduate holders. On the other hand, majority of the head teachers/deputies (6)-60.0% were graduate holders while 4(40.0%) were postgraduates. This implies that both teachers and head teachers were qualified and therefore, competent enough to carry on their duties necessary for better academic performance in their respective schools.

Generally, data obtained from the background information shows that the respondents from which the data was gathered were a true representation of the study population from which the results presented in the subsequent section would be generalized. This indicates that the results obtained are valid and reliable; which gives the entire study scholarly credibility. Diploma had majority because secondary schools employ them because they are cheaper to pay and maintain than degree holders.

4.3 Student retention rate in USE schools

Student retention rate was the dependent variable of the study and was conceptualized to include indicators of enrolment, and number of students who sat for UCE measured using

figures of 2012 S1 intake and number of students who sat for S4 after four years in 2015. The findings on student retention rate are shown below.

Table 7: Proportion of students retained in the sampled USE schools between the period 2012 and 2015

2012 S1 intake	Total no. of 2015 candidates	UCE Retention rate
2922	2344	80.2%

As indicated in Table 8 above, out of the 2922 S1 intake for 2012 in the sampled schools, only 2344 students sat for S4 after 4 years thus giving a retention rate of 80.2%. The results show that more than half of the enrolled students completed their ordinary cycle of education. Students leave schools because parents are not able to provide for them the required school needs in terms of scholastic materials and personal effects and also most students' parents do not participate in the school meeting hence a school information gap on care and support for their children; this therefore has affected student's retention negatively.

4.4 The relationship between parents' provision of school needs and student retention rate in USE schools in Mbale District.

The first objective of the study was to establish the relationship between parents' provision of school needs and student retention rate in USE schools in Mbale District. Parents' provision of school needs was conceptualized to include indicators of scholastic materials, meals, willingness to provide school needs and medication. Five statements which were scored on the five Likert scale ranging from 5 (for strongly agree), 4 (for agree), 3 (for not sure), 2 (for disagree), and 1 (for strongly disagree) were given to respondents with the aim of establishing their views regarding parents' provision of school needs. Data collected was both quantitative and qualitative through which the later was got from PTAs and BOGs representatives and the first from student leaders, teachers and head teachers.

Quantitative results were presented and analyzed using mean as follows.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for parents' provision of school needs

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Remarks
Parents always provide their children with scholastic materials when asked for.	20 (13.2%)	28 (18.4%)	14 (9.2%)	67 (44.1%)	23 (15.1%)	3.30	High
Parents frequently provide all instructional materials required for their children	35 (23.0%)	52 (34.2%)	12 (7.9%)	38 (25.0%)	15 (9.9%)	2.64	Average
Parents always provide meals for their children	32 (21.1%)	47 (30.9%)	17 (11.2%)	38 (25.0%)	18 (11.8%)	2.76	Average
Parents are always coerced to provide school needs for their children.	15 (9.9%)	28 (18.4%)	11 (7.2%)	64 (42.1%)	34 (23.4%)	3.49	High
Parents always provide adequate schools needs for their children.	39 (25.7%)	51 (33.6%)	10 (6.6%)	34 (22.3%)	18 (11.8%)	2.61	Average

Source: Primary data (2016)

Table 9 above shows that the respondents felt that parents always provide their children with scholastic materials when asked for (mean = 3.30). These findings revealed a high perception of parents' provision of school needs for their children. Since scholastic materials are provided when asked for, it implies that the majority of the students are availed with scholastic materials on time. The provision of scholastic materials compliments the available materials that the school may be having hence motivating the student to read hard by themselves even when the teachers are not around, resulting into high retention and overall good academic performance.

Also, the respondents felt that parents are always coerced to provide school needs for their children (mean = 3.49). This implies that unless the parents are coerced, they cannot provide school needs for their children. This implies that parental involvement in providing children's school needs is still wanting and not taken as a responsibility since parents always want to be coerced first. However, though the percentage of parents who are not coerced and willingly provide school needs for their children is small (28.3%), it is unfortunate since it shows that some parents do not take the education of their children seriously. In addition, It means that if children are equipped with scholastic materials like pens, books, pencils, mathematical sets and so forth, they are likely to concentrate on their studies thus remain in school until time of expected completion. On the other hand, if the scholastic materials are not provided it can affect the students' concentration and interest thus may end up dropping out of school.

Furthermore, the respondents felt that parents above average fairly provide all instructional materials required for their children (mean = 2.64). These findings revealed an average perception of parents' provision of instructional materials for their children. It means that though instructional materials are provided, some parents provide them once in a while. So, provision of scholastic materials once in a while does not boost children's retention.

In finding out whether parents always provide meals for their children, majority of the respondents had a fair perception (mean=2.76), implying that much as some parents provided meals for their children, a bigger proportion (52.0%) did not. It means that if a bigger number of students is not availed with meals, they study on empty stomachs which might negatively affect their interest and concentration in class thus resorting to leaving school before the right time.

Further still, the findings show a moderate perception that parents always provide adequate school needs for their children (mean = 2.61). This means that a relatively bigger proportion of students, though provided with school needs, they are always inadequate and so likely to be dormant in class and therefore, find difficulties to conceptualize some concepts while in class.

Table 10: Pearson product moment correlation between parents’ provision of school needs and students’ retention rate

		Parents’ provision of schoolneeds	Student retention
Parents’ provision of school needs	Pearson Correlation	1	.967**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
	N	152	152
Student retention	Pearson Correlation	.967**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
	N	152	152

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

Source: Primary data (2016)

As in Table 10 above, the Pearson product moment correlation was applied to establish the relationship between parents’ provision of school needs and students’ retention rate in Universal secondary education schools in Mbale District. The results above showed a positive and significant relationship between parents’ provision of school needs and students’ retention rate ($r=0.967^{**}$, $Sig=0.007$). The relationship is statistically significant because the calculated p- value is less than 0.05 criterions thus a p-value less than 0.05 leads us to conclude that there is evidence against the null hypothesis. The implication of the findings is that parents’ provision of school needs has something to do with students’ retention rate. From the findings it should be noted that although very important, parents’ provision of school needs has significant relationship with students’ retention rate. It means that parents’ provision of school needs is essential in determining students’ retention rate.

Some responses from BOGs and PTAs representatives were in disagreement with teachers, head teachers and student leaders. The responses from interviews were presented, analyzed and interpreted as follows:

During interviews, one of the school boards said that:

“When particular materials are needed like text books or practical items for science or fine art material for those offering fine art, students hardly have them hence slowing down the teaching of the students which affects their performance and in turn their retention in school”.

In an interview with one of the PTAs representative, he noted that:

“Children are not provided with necessary or required learning materials which affects their learning and interest to continue with their studies”.

Also, one of the BOG representative remarked:

“Parents are involved in their children`s education by paying school needs/ requirements like ink for photocopying”

Another key informant said:

Parents provide school needs like pens, bags and uniforms, mathematical sets among others.

Another B.O.G representative was of the view that:

Parents are involved in their children`s education in that they provide their children with pocket money and this keeps them going and continuing with their studies. This in turn helps students to be settled at school.

Another member said:

“Parents provide learners with scholastic materials and ream of paper and this facilitates printing of tests, assessment and term examinations. This comforts the children in class and motivates them to study. However, some parents provide school needs but most of them do not do it in time”

Another member said:

“To a certain extent, parents are involved in their children’s education, and majority are not always willing to provide school needs for their children, this in turn demoralize students’ enthusiasm and commitment to settle while in school and this might force children of such parents dropping out of school thus contributing to low retention levels”

The interview findings from the BOGs and PTAs representatives seem to suggest that though some parents do not cooperate, majority provide school needs to their children which encourage students to be well set in school hence high retention. It is imperative to note that parents support their children through providing the necessary needs to retain their children in school, so the effect of parents’ provision of school needs for their children cannot be underestimated.

4.6 The relationship between parents' payment of supplementary fees and students' retention rate in Universal secondary education schools in Mbale District

The second objective of the study was to establish the relationship between parents' payment of supplementary fees and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district. Parents' payment of supplementary fees was conceptualized to include indicators of fixed top-up fees payment per term, special charges per term, one-off annual fees, school levies and ease with which parents pay supplementary fees. Five statements which were scored on the five likert scale ranging from 5 (for strongly agree), 4 (for agree), 3 (for not sure), 2 (for disagree), and 1 (for strongly disagree) were given to respondents with the aim of establishing their views regarding parents' payment of supplementary fees. Data collected was both quantitative and qualitative; through which the later was got from PTAs and BOGs representatives and the first from student leaders, teachers and head teachers. The results were presented, analyzed and interpreted as follows:

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics for parents' payment of supplementary fees

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Remarks
Parents always pay fixed top-up fees per term in time.	57 (37.5%)	69 (45.4%)	9 (5.9%)	11 (7.2%)	6 (3.9%)	1.95	Low
Special charges per term are always paid by parents as expected.	53 (23.7%)	77 (41.4%)	9 (7.9%)	7 (14.5%)	6 (12.5%)	1.92	Low
Parents pay one-off annual fees for their children as required.	62 (40.8%)	61 (40.1%)	13 (8.6%)	10 (6.6%)	6 (3.9%)	1.93	Low
Parents pay school levies on time	53 (34.9%)	72 (47.4%)	12 (7.9%)	9 (5.9%)	6 (3.9%)	1.97	Low
Parents are finding it difficult to pay supplementary fees for their children	12 (7.9%)	35 (23.0%)	20 (13.2%)	35 (23.0%)	50 (32.9%)	3.50	High

Source: Primary data (2016)

Findings in table 11 above shows that parents don't pay fixed top-up fees on time (Mean = 1.95), and special charges per term are not always paid by parents as expected (Mean = 1.92). This implies late payment of top-up fees coupled with inadequate payment of special charges. It means that when such payments are not made on time and in required the amount, students' concentration in class is likely to be low because there is likely to be increased movements from school to home to collect school fees; depression and worries about top-up fees are likely to increase and even self-esteem may decrease, hence a negative bearing on students' retention rate in USE schools and the reverse is true.

Similarly, findings indicate that parents don't pay one-off annual fees for their children as required (Mean = 1.93), and also, parents don't pay school levies on time (Mean = 1.97).

This implies that there is late payment of school levies coupled with inadequate payment of one-off annual fees in USE schools, an indication that the parents do not provide the entire school requirement on time hence forcing the children to be out of school. It means that if school levies are not paid on time ongoing school activities that facilitate the teaching of the children such as purchasing instructional materials and teachers' welfare are likely to be affected. This implies that parental involvement in paying children's supplementary fees is still wanting and this might have a negative bearing on student retention rate.

In addition to the findings above, the results show that parents are finding it difficult to pay supplementary fees for their children (mean=3.50). If parents are finding difficulties, it means that they will not be able to provide the entire school requirements on time and this will affect daily school activities and students' full participation in all the school activities, hence forcing them to be out of school. The difficulties perhaps are attributed to the overwhelming poverty among the parents and the entire population at large. So because of poverty, parents are unable to provide adequate meals, school dues are paid late or even not paid at all.

Table 10: Pearson product moment correlation between parents’ payment of supplementary fees and students’ retention rate

		Parents’ payment of supplementary fees	Students’ retention rate
Parents’ payment of supplementary fees	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.116
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.750
	N	152	152
Students’ retention rate	Pearson Correlation	-0.116	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.750	
	N	152	152

Source: Primary data (2016)

As in Table 12 above, the Pearson product moment correlation was applied to establish the relationship between parents’ payment of supplementary fees and students’ retention rate in Universal secondary education schools in Mbale District. The results above showed a negative and insignificant relationship between parents’ payment of supplementary fees and students’ retention rate ($r=-0.116$, $Sig=0.750$). The relationship is statistically insignificant because the calculated p- value is greater than 0.05 criterion thus rejecting the alternative hypothesis. The implication of the findings is that parents’ payment of supplementary fees has nothing to do with students’ retention rate. From the findings it should be noted that although very important, parents’ payment of supplementary fees has no significant relationship with students’ retention rate. It means there are other factors beyond the scope of the current study, which are essential in influencing students’ retention rate.

Responses from BOGs and PTAs representatives were in agreement with teachers, head teachers and student leaders. The responses from interviews were presented, analyzed and interpreted as follows:

During interviews one of the BOG representatives said that:

“When parents are requested to pay PTA fee which can be used to motivate teachers, it’s just few who positively respond, and this affects school routine activities and might force teachers not to teach, hence creating room for students to dodge classes and eventually leave school”.

In an interview with one of the PTAs representative, he noted that:

“Parents delay to pay developmental fees, hence leading to a negative relationship with student retention rate”

Also, one of the BOG representative remarked:

“The parents pay a supplementary fee of shs. 60,000 in addition to the government fees of shs. 40,000 per child. However, some parents delay to pay and this affects the smooth running of the school activities”

Another key informant said:

“Parents pay additional fees as developmental fees, though it’s paid slowly and in instalments. Some parents more so in senior one pay supplementary fees in time because it’s their first time; meaning that as their children go ahead, they tend to deteriorate”

Another B.O.G representative was of the view that:

“Parents are involved in their children’s education in that they provide their children with pocket money and this keep them going and continuing with their studies. This in turns help students to be settled at school”

In accordance with the interview findings from the BOGs and PTAs representatives, they seem to suggest that though parents pay supplementary fees for their children, payment is done late. So when supplementary fees is not paid on time, children are likely not to be in school fulltime and their concentration can easily deteriorate because of increased worries of being chased away from school due to delayed payments.

4.7 The relationship between parents' participation in school meetings and students' retention rate in Universal secondary education schools in Mbale District

The third objective of the study was to establish the relationship between parents' participation in school meetings and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district. Parents' participation in school meetings was conceptualized to include indicators of parents' invitation, frequency of attending meetings, parents' turn-up, and annual general meeting attendance. Five statements which were scored on five likert scale ranging from (5) for strongly agree (4) for agree, (3) for not sure (2) for disagree (1) for strongly disagree were given to respondents with the aim of establishing their views regarding parents' participation in school meetings. Data collected was both quantitative and qualitative; through which the later was got from PTAs and BOGs representatives and the first from student leaders, teachers and head teachers. The results were presented, analyzed and interpreted as follows:

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics for parents' participation in school meetings

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Remarks
The school often invites parents to attend school meetings.	35 (23.0%)	29 (19.1%)	- (-)	20 (13.2%)	68 (44.7%)	3.3750	High
Parents are involved in school meetings more than three times in a year.	17 (11.2%)	20 (13.2%)	4 (2.6%)	66 (43.4%)	45 (29.6%)	3.6711	High
Parents' turn-up for school meetings invitations is very high.	30 (19.7%)	9 (5.9%)	3 (2.0%)	52 (34.2%)	58 (38.2%)	3.6513	High
Parents attend class days/AGM meetings whenever called upon	23 (51.1%)	14 (9.2%)	4 (2.6%)	62 (40.8%)	49 (32.2%)	3.6579	High
Parents come to school and talk to teaches about their children's performance	32 (21.1%)	17 (11.2%)	9 (5.9%)	38 (25.0%)	56 (36.8%)	3.4539	High

Source: Primary data (2016)

Findings in table 13 above show that schools often invite parents to attend meetings (Mean = 3.3750), parents attend class days /AGM meetings whenever called upon (Mean = 3.6579). If parents are invited, it implies that the school authorities value the involvement of the parents as stakeholders and so they are needed to actively involve themselves in meetings to improve retention of their children. In addition, the findings suggest that schools invest a lot in having the parents participate in the school affairs and there is much emphasis put on parent attendance of school meetings. However, when the researcher interacted with one of the PTA representative, it was noted that as much as parents were invited, meetings meant nothing to them. They called it a waste of time and

some did not even turn up. Hence, this shows that parents' participation in school meetings even when invited by the school authorities is still wanting.

Nonetheless, the findings indicate that parents participate in school meetings more than three times in a year. (Mean = 3.6711), and parents' turn up for meetings is very high (Mean = 3.6513) and average parents come to school to talk about their children's performance. Since parents don't attend meetings more than three times, it implies that parents do not value frequent school meetings when called upon. It implies that school authorities have invited parents and the parent's response to the call is determined by the number of times they have attended. This finding shows that more effort needs to be made to encourage parents attend in bigger numbers. Meeting parents over the academic affairs of their children is an encouragement for hard work and this can make students stay in school till the required time.

Table 12: Pearson product moment correlation between parents' participation in school meetings and students' retention rate

Variables	Computed index	Parents' participation in school meetings	Students' retention rate
Parents' participation in school meetings	Pearson Correlation	1	.886
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	152	152
Students' retention rate	Pearson Correlation	.886	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	152	152

Source: Primary data (2016)

As Table 14 above shows, the Pearson product moment correlation was applied to establish the relationship between parents' participation in school meetings and students' retention rate in Universal secondary education schools in Mbale District. The results above showed a strong positive and significant relationship between parents'

participation in school meetings and students' retention rate ($r=0.886$, $\text{Sig}=0.000$). The relationship is statistically significant because the calculated p-value is less than the 0.05 criterion thus a p-value less than 0.05 leads us to conclude that there is evidence against the null hypothesis. The implication of the findings is that parents' participation in school meetings has something to do with students' retention rate. From the findings it should be noted that although very important, parents' participation in school meetings has significant relationship with students' retention rate. It means that parents' participation in school meetings is essential in determining students' retention rate.

Some responses from BOGs and PTAs representatives were in disagreement with teachers, head teachers and student leaders. The responses from interviews were presented, analyzed and interpreted as follows:

During interviews one of the BOG representatives said that:

“Parents have an I don't care attitude. So, if parents continue shying away or ignoring meetings then the students' performance will dwindle and this might force them quit school”.

In an interview with one of the PTAs representative, he noted that:

“Parents physically attend the school meetings but few of them participate.”

However, one of the BOG representatives remarked:

“Parents attend meetings and by so doing they get to know what is happening at school and they are enabled to monitor their children's performance”

In line with the above, another key informant was of the view that:

“Students whose parents respond to meetings develop a close relationship with the teachers and this boosts their performance in class, with this, the students also put in more effort not to disappoint the parents as well as teachers who are working tirelessly to retain them in school and above all improve their performance”

From the above qualitative data, there is need for more effort in mobilizing parents in USE schools to be involved in the academic affairs of their children. The ideal situation

should be 100% parental involvement in school meetings so as to achieve a high student retention rate. Through attending meetings parents can, together with the school management, address challenges towards the wellbeing of their children academically.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings in relation to the research objectives of the study. It is divided into three sections. The first section is a summary of findings on parental involvement and student retention rate. This is followed by discussions, conclusions, recommendations, limitations of the study, contributions of the study and recommendation for further studies.

5.1 Summary of Study Findings

5.1.1 The relationship between parents' provision of school needs and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale District

The study found a positive and significant relationship between parents' provision of school needs and students' retention rate ($r=0.967^{**}$ and significance $p \text{ Sig}=0.007$). The study found a high perception on parents' provision of school needs. This shows that parents' provision of school needs has something to do with students' retention rate. The findings suggest that parents' provision of school needs has a significant relationship with students' retention rate. It means that parents' provision of school needs is essential in determining students' retention rate.

5.1.2 The relationship between parents' payment of supplementary fees and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale District

The study found a negative and insignificant relationship between parents' payment of supplementary fees and students' retention rate ($r=-0.116$ and significance $p \text{ Sig}=0.750$). The study found a low perception on parents' payment of supplementary fees. This shows that parents' payment of supplementary fees has nothing to do with students' retention rate. The findings suggest that although very important, parents' payment of supplementary fees has no significant relationship with students' retention rate. It means

there are other factors beyond the scope of the current study, which are essential in influencing students' retention rate.

5.1.3 The relationship between parents' participation in school meetings and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale district.

The study found a strong positive and significant relationship between parents' participation in school meetings and students' retention rate ($r=0.886$ and significance p Sig=0.000). The study found a high perception on parents' participation in school meetings. This shows that parents' participation in school meetings has something to do with students' retention rate. The findings suggest that parents' participation in school meetings has a very important significant relationship with students' retention rate. It means that parents' participation in school meetings is essential in determining students' retention rate.

5.2. Discussion of study findings

5.2.1 The relationship between parents' provision of school needs and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale District

The study found a positive and significant relationship between parents' provision of school needs and students' retention rate. The findings suggest that parents' provision of school needs has a significant relationship with students' retention rate. It means that parents' provision of school needs is essential in determining students' retention rate.

The above study findings and observations are contradicted by Nyamusana (2010) who noted that the benefits of parental involvement in academic issues have not been realized in many of the schools, which has had the effect of impinging on students' retention. The finding that there is no significant relationship between parental involvement and student retention rate is apparently attributable to the fact that for both the poor and better performing students, parents were involved in the management of their discipline and, indeed, student discipline was reported to be good.

According to the USE guidelines (MOES, 2008), parents are responsible for providing school needs for their children. These needs include clothing, meals, scholastic materials and medical care apart from school requirements like uniform, and stationery. The USE policy may be pro-poor but to an impoverished family, these needs may carry serious financial implications which can lead to a child's failure to continue with school. So, even though under USE secondary education is in theory free, parents still have to part with a lot of money for uniform(including shoes), scholastic materials, food, and transport.

Consequently, the findings and observations above concur with what Lukendo (2011) found in her research. She contends that provision of scholastic needs by parents have a positive relationship with their children's retention rate in school. She further argues that children whose parents provide enough needs and instructional materials like exercise books, pens, pencils, mathematical sets are encouraged to do the given class exercises, to practice drawing and construction of polygons compared to children who lack the basic scholastic materials. Children who lack the basic scholastic materials either don't try the given exercises or absentee themselves from school and this might turn into complete school dropout.

Likewise, Usman (2014) argues that the parents' provision of basic needs to their children at school affects their completion. He further says that some parents did not provide basic needs like functional fees; scholastic materials such as files and lunch for their children. Failure to provide such basic needs was probably related to lack of morale and encouragement from the parents and thus low retention.

5.2.2 The relationship between parents' payment of supplementary fees and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale District

The study found a negative and insignificant relationship between parents' payment of supplementary fees and students' retention rate. The findings suggest that although very important, parents' payment of supplementary fees has no significant relationship with students' retention rate. It means there are other factors beyond the scope of the current study, which are essential in influencing students' retention rate.

The above study findings and observations are supported by Nyamusana (2010). According to Nyamusana (2010), with or without USE, parents need to let their children go to school on time and provide them with necessary equipment, otherwise students whose parents don't conform to that have always been sent home for lack of school fees hence missing classes and exams. Ssonko (2011), noted that even if the teachers and students are very good, the absence of financial resources and subsequent inadequacies of scholastic materials could impinge on student retention. Students entering the middle grades in high-poverty neighborhoods are more likely than in the primary grades to experience chaotic, under resourced classrooms and schools. Many of these students conclude that not much productivity is going on in these schools (Wilson & Corbett, 2011). In a study carried out by Feyfant and Rey (2014) in Scottish schools, it was concluded that for more than 10 years then, parents' role in school was the main factor responsible for 'retaining students in school'.

In another study carried out by Cotton and Wikelund (2006), parents' involvement in students' schooling created effectiveness in fostering students' achievement and retention. Aspects considered were; helping students in home work, helping students in making post-secondary plans, behavioral improvement, home school communication and parent school agreement on reward. However, the study shows no clear evidence of a causal relationship between parents' involvement in children's discipline management and academic performance.

In Uganda the Government White Paper (1992) makes it clear that PTAs should continue functioning as voluntary organizations that are mainly concerned with both students' and teachers' welfare and the overall development of the school. This may be done through paying school fees in time, fundraising for schools, donating, and participating in the planning for the allocation of these resources.

5.2.3 The relationship between parents' participation in school meetings and students' retention rate in USE schools in Mbale District.

The study found a positive and significant relationship between parents' participation in school meetings and students' retention rate. The findings suggest that parents'

participation in school meetings has a significant relationship with students' retention rate. It means that parents' participation in school meetings is essential in determining students' retention rate.

The above study findings and observations are in agreement with Catsambis(2011) who noted that though in some areas parents report a serious lack of communication from schools and the families, they themselves contact the schools infrequently hence affecting the student's retention levels negatively.

Parental absence from meetings has been highlighted as a major cause for poor student's retention levels. Some parents call them as a waste of time. However, Eamon (2010) emphasized the coming to meetings, or coming to parent-teacher conferences as a way of parents' involvement in children's education assessment which can boost student's retention. Family practices of involvement are as or more important than family background variables in determining whether and how students' progress and succeed in school (Epstein, 2004).

However, Chan and Chui (2014) disagreed when they stated that elsewhere; teachers have been found to have some reservations about parents' capability in taking their partnership responsibilities. It was further discovered that principals do not ask parents to participate in decision-making meetings because they are perceived not to have confidence in policy issues, in return, the students end up victims of circumstances when they abandon school or shift to another school.

5.3. Conclusions of the study

The following conclusions were drawn from the study findings;

In conclusion therefore, Students leave schools because parents are not able to provide for them the required school needs in terms of scholastic materials and personal effects

It's concluded that parents payment of supplementary fees is not a problem to students retention because they are affordable and also in the reach of most parents.

It's also concluded that most students' parents do not participate in the school meeting hence a school information gap on care and support for their children; this therefore has affected student's retention negatively.

5.4 Recommendations

In regard to the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- As concluded in the current study that parents' provision of school needs has a positive and significant relationship with students' retention rate, it is recommended that Head teachers, Board of governors should clearly state and explain to parents the necessity of providing school needs to boost the students' retention rate. The parents should clearly be informed and reminded of their roles and responsibilities of always providing all the required school needs that aid in teaching and learning process of their children.
- Since the relationship between parents' payment of supplementary fees and students' retention rate is statistically negative and insignificant, it is recommended that that the managers of the schools in Mbale District devise non-tuition related means of financing their schools, since the parents do not have sufficient capacity to support their children's education satisfactorily. This could be done through the undertaking of income generating projects and attraction of donations, which could ensure that the managers of the schools are able to top up the fees collected from the students and be in a better position to achieve good results.
- As established by the current study, parents' participation in school meetings had a positive and significant relationship with students' retention rate. As a result, it is recommended that parents and guardians should give attention and participate in all the school activities and shape their children. This will build a brand of disciplined students ready and willing to learn and read hard which will in turn improve their retention in school

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The study relied on primary information provided by teachers, head teachers, student leaders, BOG and PTA representatives who are currently in in the USE schools, missing out those who had served in these schools before the study was conducted. Parents' views were left out yet they would have enriched the study findings. Similarly, the study relied on purely primary data which could be emotionally motivated without the use of documentary evidence which, for confidential policies, could not be accessed by this study. Nevertheless, the findings can be generalized in the education sector as regards parental involvement and retention of students in secondary schools

5.6 Contributions of the Study

Since this kind of study is the first to be conducted in USE schools in Mbale District on parental involvement and students' retention rate, the findings have contributed to the research gap which has been existing. In other words, the study has provided empirical evidence on the relationship parental involvement and students' retention rate.

The study is also expected to provide a basis for intervention into the persistently troublesome area of student retention rate, by the District and National Authorities, together with other stakeholders like the Multinationals and NGOs. This is meant to be done with a view of increasing on the number of students who complete their secondary education in the district and in Uganda as a whole.

5.7 Recommendations for further studies

Future researchers should conduct comparative studies on parental involvement and students' retention rate based on school location-rural and urban or ownership-government, private or community based schools.

Since the current study used cross sectional survey design, the researcher would also like to suggest that future research could use longitudinal survey design to study students' retention rate and parental involvement to see whether similar results would be got. This could help reveal the causal relationship between parental involvement and students' retention rate over a period of time. Thus, researchers could analyze changes in the

sample and describe and/or explain the changes and examine whether parental involvement would influence children even in their adulthood.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND TEACHERS

Dear respondent:

A research study is being carried out on the relationship between parents' involvement and student retention in Universal Secondary Education schools in Mbale District. You have been selected as one of the resourceful person to provide information on this subject.

Section A: General information of respondents

A1. Position held: 1. Head teacher /deputy head teacher () 2. Teacher ()

A2. Sex: 1. Male () 2. Female ()

A3. Age group: 1. 20-30 years () 2. 31-40 years ()
3. 41- 50 years () 4. More than 50 years ()

A4. Years in service: 1. 1-5 years () 2. 6-10 years () 3. 11-15 years ()
4. More than 15 years ()

Section B: Parents' provision of school needs

What is your level of agreement with the following statements on parents' provision of school needs? Use a scale of 1-5 where; 1. Strongly Disagree (SD) 2. Disagree (D) 3. Neutral (N) 4. Agree (A) 5. Strongly Agree (SA)

SN	Parents provision of school needs	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Parents always provide their children with scholastic materials when asked for.					

2.	Parents frequently provide all instructional materials required for their children					
3.	Parents always provide meals for their children					
4.	Parents are always coerced to provide school needs for their children.					
5.	Parents always provide adequate schools needs from their parents.					

Section C: Parents’ payment of supplementary fees

What is your level of agreement with the following statements on parents’ payment of supplementary fees? Use a scale of 1-5 where; 1. Strongly Disagree (SD) 2. Disagree (D) 3. Neutral (N) 4. Agree (A) 5. Strongly Agree (SA)

Parents` payment of supplementary fees.		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Parents always pay fixed top-up fees per term in time.					
2.	Special charges per term are always paid by parents as expected.					
3.	Parents pay one-off annual fees for their children as required.					
4.	Parents pay school levies on time					
5.	Parents are finding it difficult to pay supplementary fee for their children					

SectionD: Participation in school meetings

What is your level of agreement with the following statements on parents’ participation in school meetings? Use a scale of 1-5 where;1. Strongly Disagree (SD)2. Disagree (D) 3. Neutral (N) 4. Agree (A) 5. Strongly Agree (SA)

Parents` participation in school meetings		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The school often invites parents to attend school meetings.					

2.	Parents are involved in school meetings more than three times in a year.					
3.	Parents' turn-up for school meetings invitations is very high.					
4.	Parents attend class days/AGM meetings whenever called upon					
5.	Parents come to school and talk to teaches about their children's performance					

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENT LEADERS

Dear respondent:

A research study is being carried out on the relationship between parents’ involvement and student retention in Universal Secondary Education in schools in Mbale District. You have been selected as one of the resourceful person to provide information on this subject.

Section A: General information of respondents

- A1. Sex: 1. Male () 2. Female ()
- A2. Age group: 1. Below 15 years () 2. 16-20 years () 3. 20 years and more ()
- A3. Years studied in this school: 1. 1-5 years () 2. 6-10 years () 3.11-15 years () 4. More than 15 years ()
- A4. Type of school 1.Private () 2. Government ()

Section B: Parents’ provision of school needs

What is your level of agreement with the following statements on parents’ provision of school needs? Use a scale of 1-5 where; 1. Strongly Disagree (SD) 2. Disagree (D) 3. Neutral (N) 4. Agree (A) 5. Strongly Agree (SA)

SN	Parents provision of school needs	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Parents always provide their children with scholastic materials when asked for.					
2.	Parents always offer to provide instructional materials for their children.					
3.	Parents always provide meals for their children.					
4.	Parents are always coerced to provide school needs for their children.					
5.	Students who receive adequate school needs from their parents are more likely to be retained.					
6.	It’s an obligation for parents to pay for their children`s medication in this school.					

Section C: Parents' payment of supplementary fees

What is your level of agreement with the following statements on parents' payment of supplementary fees? Use a scale of 1-5 where; 1. Strongly Disagree (SD) 2. Disagree (D) 3. Neutral (N) 4. Agree (A) 5. Strongly Agree (SA)

SN	Parents` payment of supplementary fees.	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Parents always pay fixed top up fees per term in time.					
2.	Special charges per term are always paid by parents as expected.					
3.	It's an obligation for parents to pay one-off annual fees for their children.					
4.	Students who receive financial support from their parents are more likely to be retained in school					
5.	It's an obligation for every parent to pay PTA charges.					
6.	Parents are finding it difficult to pay supplementary fee for their children in USE schools.					

Section D: Participation in school meetings

What is your level of agreement with the following statements on parents' participation in school meetings? Use a scale of 1-5 where; 1. Strongly Disagree (SD) 2. Disagree (D) 3. Neutral (N) 4. Agree (A) 5. Strongly Agree (SA)

SN	Parents` participation in school meetings	1	2	3	4	5
1.	The school often invites parents to attend school meetings.					
2.	Parents are involved in school meetings more than three times in a year.					
3.	Parents turn up for school meeting invitation is very high.					
4.	Circulars are given by school authorities to parents who do attend school meetings.					
5.	School meetings for parents about school programs and procedures are conducted at the beginning of the school year.					
6.	Parents are invited to attend at least one school activity during the school year e.g. PTA General meeting					
7.	Parents are included in the planning and implementation of school events.					

Section E: Student retention(Dependent variable)

What is your level of agreement with the following statements on the extent to which parent involvement relates with student retention? Use a scale of 1-5 where; 1. Strongly Disagree (SD) 2. Disagree (D) 3. Neutral (N) 4. Agree (A) 5. Strongly Agree (SA)

SN	Dependent variable student retention	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Parents` attendance of school meetings affects student retention positively.					
2.	Parents` payment of supplementary fees affects student retention positively.					
3.	The school has experienced a drop in student retention as a					

	result of parents` failure to pay supplementary fees.					
4.	Parents` failure to provide school needs negatively affects their children`s retention rate in school					
5.	Parents` involvement in children`s schooling has a positive association with student retention.					
6.	Parents` involvement increases school attendance and improves student retention.					
7.	Parents` failure to pay supplementary fees has always made their children to be sent back home.					

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR BOGS AND PTAREPRESENTATIVES

Interview Guiding Questions

1. Are parents involved in their children`s education?
2. If yes, how are they involved? Probe for:
 - Supplementary fees
 - School needs
 - School meetings
3. Do you think parental involvement has any relationship with their children`s retention?
4. If yes, may you please support your answer in line with:
 - (1) Provision of school needs
 - (2) Payment of supplementary fees
 - (3) Participation in school meetings
5. Is the above relationship positive or negative?
6. Please explain your opinion in (5) above

Thank you

APPENDIX D: TABLE FOR DETERMINING SAMPLE SIZE FROM A GIVEN POPULATION

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Source: Adapted from R.V.Krejcie & D.W.Morgan (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. Educational and

psychological measurement, 30. 608

Note: “N” is population size “S” is sample size.

APPENDIX E: LETTERS OF AUTHORITY



UGANDA MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

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256-31-2265138 /39 /40
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P.O. Box 20131
Kampala, Uganda
Website: <http://www.umi.ac.ug>

Your Ref:

Our Ref: G/35

22 July, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

MASTERS IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES DEGREE RESEARCH

Mr. George Wagaba is a student of the Masters in Institutional Management and Leadership of Uganda Management Institute 2nd Intake 2012/2013, **Reg. Number 12/MIML/02/013**.

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

His research Topic is: *"Parental Involvement and Student Retention in Universal Secondary Education Schools: A case of Mbale District, Eastern Uganda"*.

Yours Sincerely,

Stella Kyohairwe (PhD)
AG. HEAD, POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE

Telephones 045 33160
Telfax: 045



EDUCATION OFFICE
MBALE DISTRICT
P. O. BOX 701
MBALE
UGANDA (E.A.)

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Our Ref: 306

22nd September, 2016

To All Headteachers,
Universal Secondary Education Schools,
Mbale District.

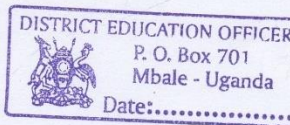
RODUCTION OF MR. GEORGE WAGABA

This is to introduce Mr. George Wagaba who is a student of Masters in Institutional Management and Leadership at Uganda Management Institute. He wishes to collect data on "Parent Involvement and Student Retention in Universal Secondary Education Schools."

This is therefore to introduce him to you for possible assistance to obtain data.


NANGOSYA MIKE M.

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER/MBALE



MBALE DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Tel: General Line: 045 433401/4
Direct Line: 045 4 660750
Fax: 045 4 33987
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Email: paulwalakira@gmail.com



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
P.O. BOX 931
MBALE

*IN ANY CORRESPONDENCE ON
THIS SUBJECT PLEASE QUOTE NO: CR. 164/2*

9th August, 2016

The District Education Officer,
Mbale.

INTRODUCTION OF MR. George Wagaba

The above mentioned is a student of Masters in Institutional Management and Leadership at Uganda Management Institute. He would like to collect data on the topic "**Parental Involvement and Student Retention in Universal Secondary Education Schools: A case of Mbale District, Eastern Region**".

The purpose of this communication is to introduce him to you for your technical guidance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wabomba'.

Wabomba Anthony
FOR: CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER.