DETERMINANTS OF ABSENTEEISM AMONG ORDINARY LEVEL SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN UGANDA

CASE STUDY: WAKISO DISTRICT

A POSTGRADUATE DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO FACULTY OF SCIENCE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother, Deborah Zawedde, my beloved daughters, Ruth, my family, Joyce and Gloria who have seen me throughout the entire course of this study. Without their support and encouragement, it would not have been possible for me to achieve all that I have.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSO: Civil Society Organisation

DDP: District Development Programme

DEO: District Education Officer

FAWE: Forum for African Women Educationalists

MDG: Mellinum Development Goals

MOES: Ministry of Education and Sports

NDP: National Development Programme

PTA: Parents Teachers Associations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee

UPE: Universal Primary Education

UPPET: Universal Post Primary Education and Training

USE: Universal Secondary Education

ABSTRACT

The study assessed the factors that explain absenteeism among Ordinary Level Secondary school students in Uganda using Wakiso district as a case study. The motivation to carry out this research was as a result of increased absenteeism among Ordinary Level Secondary school students despite the introduction of Universal Secondary Education. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. The analysis was done at three levels, that is, at Univariate analysis, Bivariate and Multivariate analysis.

The research found out that 46.85% of the students missed school because of sickness and chronic illness. The common sickness noted was malaria followed by Fever, Headache, flue and cough. The research further found out that 64.5% of the students reside more than 2 km more from the Secondary school. The researcher also found out that students whose residence is more than 2km from their school are more likely to be absent from school compared to their counter parts who reside in a range of lesser distance. Most students have secondary level as the highest level of education attained by their household head. The researcher also found out that highest education level attained by household head has an effect on secondary school student's absenteeism

The study recommends that government through the MoES should make sure that parents understand their responsibility of contributing towards the development of the school and state department of education, and school districts need to regularly measure and report the rates of chronic absenteeism and regular attendance for every school. District policies need to encourage every student to attend school every day and support school, communities, and parents in using evidence-based strategies to act upon these data to propel all students to attend school daily.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Absenteeism, according to Merriam-Webster dictionary means chronic absence. In the context of the school it is the habitual or intentional failure from going to school. Absenteeism cannot be denied because every now and then, students may miss some school activities and lessons and it becomes a problem if the student is away from school for many days. According to Balfanz & Byrnes, (2012); chronic absenteeism is typically based on total days of school missed, including both excused and unexcused absences.

Thus, truancy is typically defined as a certain number or certain frequency of unexcused absences as suggested by, Balfanz & Byrnes (2012). However, the State Board of Education (2013) states that; a student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (for example field trip), for at least half of the regular school day. Therefore, a student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered absent. The State Board of Education (2013) adopted definitions for excused and unexcused absences for use by schools and districts in order to implement the statutory policies and procedures concerning truants, and the reporting of truancy.

Education is vital in eradication of poverty, improved reproductive health and lower fertility rates, improved nutritional status, greater income equity and lower poverty incidence, as well as increased competitiveness, productivity and personal earnings (World Bank, 2007). Education is also central to other important analytical paradigms in the field of development, including the capabilities and human development approaches (UNDP, 1990). As a conceptual paradigm that puts people at the center of development, human development analysis is concerned with building human capabilities and enlarging people's freedoms and choices, as a way of enabling them to develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accordance with their needs, beliefs and interests.

Education is therefore one of the contributors to Sustaining the Millennium Development Goals. The aim of the Millennium Development Goals was to encourage development by improving social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries. These goals were derived from earlier international development targets, and were officially established following the Millennium Summit in 2000, where all world leaders present adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration (World Bank, 2000) and Education for All which is a global movement led by UNESCO, which aimed at meeting the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities.

The Free Basic Education Policy has been adopted in most countries of the world. The main aim is to ensure every child gets primary education which is considered basic as

well as subsidized secondary education. World Bank (2004) states that some countries are now declaring free universal secondary education. Secondary education is the stage of education after primary education in many countries worldwide. This level of education is considered basic in many countries Uganda included. In recent years countries like Angola, Benin, Botswana, Kenya and several other countries of sub- Saharan Africa have introduced the Free Secondary Education.

1.1 Background of the study

Sub-Saharan Africa had been one of the lowest archiving regions in terms of education; however, with the initiation of the Education for All (EFA) in 2000 by UNESCO, Sub-Saharan Africa region has made a significant progress. Primary school enrollment rates have increased in most of the countries and drop out ratios of school have dropped considerably. According to UNESCO (2010), between 1999 to 2007 the average net enrollment rate to primary school has increased from 56% to 73% in sub-Sahara Africa. Also out-of-school population has reduced by nearly 13 million from 1999 to 2007. Although primary school enrollment rates have made significant progress, secondary school enrollment rates are far behind the rest of the world. UNESCO (2010) reports that secondary school enrollment rate was the world's lowest at 34% in 2007. It varies highly from country to country. Secondary enrollment ratio was less than 11% in Niger and 97% in Seychelles and South Africa. A high level of gender bias can also be seen in this region. The number of girls who enrolls for the secondary schools is way behind of their counterpart. Delayed enrollment to secondary schools is another concern in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Over the past 15 years, Uganda adopted mass education in primary schools not only to increase access to primary education, but also to reduce student's absenteeism. The accelerated primary school expansion called for expanded access for all, even to secondary schooling since the economic development strategies require human resources with knowledge and skill above the primary level. In effect, Uganda placed priority on expanding access to basic education in 2007 through the introduction of the Universal Post Primary Education and Training (UPPET) Policy (Nishimura & Ogawa 2009). This effort created more places at lower secondary and technical colleges for primary school leavers as it reflects the sociopolitical realities of much larger numbers of children graduating from the primary schools seeking secondary places and the systemic need to increase secondary output. The national policy issues emphasize not only equality but also quality in education and economic aspects of life. Equity in education has been a concern of almost all the countries, whether developed, transitional, or in the process of developing. The international policy benchmarks on education are reflected in the National Development Plan of Uganda (NDP 2010/'11-2014/'15), a new overarching national planning and policy framework for service delivery across sectors of government, education inclusive (Government of Uganda, 2010). Attending secondary education and completing it successfully is one of the important determinants of children's future lives in Uganda.

The introduction of free lower secondary education transformed into a dramatic increase in enrollments, with the senior one cohort increasing from 208,861 (110,469 males and

98,392 (females) in 2006 to 291,797 (154,923 males and 136,874 females) in 2008 (Uganda Education Statistical Abstract, 2010). The increased enrollments translated into an increase in transition from primary seven to senior one, from 31% (30% males and 32% females) in 1994 to 68.6 % (69.7% males and 67.4% females) in 2007 (Uganda Education Statistical Abstract, 2010). Generally, completion rates increased to 39.0% in 2010 (45% males and 32% females) from 29.0% (33% males and 25% females) in 2006 (29.0%) (Uganda Education Statistical Abstract, 2010). It is evident that gender disparity still exists where the boys outnumber the girls across all the dimensions.

In Uganda, girls have much less access to education than do boys; moreover, children from families with low economic status usually fare less well than their middle-income peers. Gender Inequality limits female access to secondary education. For girls in poor families where the opportunity costs of schooling are particularly high, the question of the value of schooling is of pressing importance. Equity is cited as one of the major challenges facing educational development. The World Bank (2007) argues that public spending on education is often inequitable, when qualified potential students are unable to enroll in institutions because educational institutions are lacking sufficient resources or because of students' inability to pay.

The challenge of attendance of students of Secondary Schools in Uganda, especially at the rural areas has been a persistent issue. In most cases, many of these students come late to schools in the morning. While many of them participate in collective worship at assembly, they leave schools before closing hours for other unauthorized activities and in

some cases too, a handful number of these students will not even bother to come to school (Fagbenle, 2008). Though this absenteeism being exhibited by the Secondary School students may be with genuine reasons, majority of them displayed this attitude for no condonable reasons. Attendance has been defined as the physical presence of the students in schools/classes. Attendance can be divided into two extremes of being 'a mere appearance of the students at school' and 'the students present during the whole day'. In some cases, some of these students may truly be in school and but rather engage themselves in illegal activities such as sleeping, reading negatively motivated novels and going to the field to play games among others. Regular attendance is characterized as being present, punctual and being involved in the activities of the school. The regular students will always come to school except for some certain reasons beyond their control which may probably be sickness, death or accident which are regarded as legal absenteeism in the dictionary of education. On the other hand, irregular attendance for whatever causes is a distress call. It can therefore be described as a deliberate absenteeism of oneself from school for no just cause.

1.1.1 Absenteeism in USE Schools in Uganda

According to Komakech & Ossu (2014) the causes of students' absenteeism in Universal Secondary Education (USE) Schools in Uganda are un excused absences which is responsible for 64.3% of the total students' absenteeism in the school while 35.5% are excused and they include: Lack of scholastic requirements, illness or disease, loss of parent or close relative, taking care of the sick, and bad weather. A study by Komakech & Ossu (2014) shown that 20.7% of the students in Uganda absent themselves because

they lack scholastic requirements/materials such as; books, pens, uniforms, calculators, and additional fees contribution like; field work fee, school bus contribution, and PTA (Development Fund). These extra fees are a barrier to students' attendance. It is also evident that household work contributes to 12.4% of the student absenteeism in the USE schools in Uganda. Komakech & Ossu (2014) also found out that Students who are homeless and staying with friends, relatives are more absent from school than those staying with their biological parents for instance in rural areas; they have to wake up very early in the morning and go to the garden, fetch enough water for use, teeter animals (cattle, goats, pigs), then prepare for school depending on the time the task is accomplished and sometimes are told to remain to do the construction work.

Despite the increased number of secondary schools both government and private implementing USE programme for instance from 1,647 (904 government; 743 private) in 2012 to 1,919 (1,024 government and 879 private) in 2013 long distance to school is still a challenge to students accounting to 7.6% of students' absenteeism (Komakech & Ossu, 2014) Some students still cover eight (8) Kilo-meters daily on foot to reach their schools for instance in one of the sub-counties in Serere District (Komakech & Ossu, 2014), all the three (3) secondary schools in the sub-county are located in one parish with two implementing USE programme having three primary schools while the rest of the seven (7) parishes have eleven government primary schools with no single secondary school as.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The challenge of attendance of students of Secondary Schools in Uganda, especially at the rural areas has been a persistent issue. In most cases, many of these students come late to schools in the morning. While many of them participate in collective worship at assembly, they leave schools before closing hours for other unauthorized activities and in some cases too, a handful number of these students will not even bother to come to school (Fagbenle, 2008).

Despite the government effort to provide tuition, teachers, infrastructure and instructional materials to the USE participating schools, students' absenteeism is an alarming problem for administrators, teachers, parents and society in general. Komakech & Ossu (2014) found out that students' absenteeism in Universal Secondary Education (USE) Schools in Uganda accounts to 64.3% (un excused absences) and 35.5% (excused).

A student that is frequently absent fails to master a minimum of skills and competences and is likely to be forced to repeat the grade, this does not only double the cost to educate that student but also reduces the student's morale to continue schooling hence eventual dropping out of school. Therefore, there was need to examine the determinants of absenteeism among Ordinary level secondary school students' in Uganda.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 Major Objective of the study

The major Objective of this study is to examine the determinants of absenteeism among Ordinary Level Secondary school students in Uganda.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To determine whether demographic factors influence absenteeism among Ordinary level secondary students.
2. To determine whether economic factors influence absenteeism among Ordinary Level secondary students.
3. To determine whether social factors influence absenteeism among Ordinary level secondary students.

1.4 Hypotheses of the study

i. Gender of the lower secondary school student has no effect on his/her absenteeism.

ii. Household work has no influence on the secondary school student's absenteeism.

iii. Sickness/chronic illness has no influence on the secondary school student's absenteeism.

iv. Age of household head has no influence on the secondary school student's absenteeism.

v. Sex of household head has no effect on secondary school student's absenteeism.

vi. Relationship of student to the household head does not affect secondary school student's absenteeism.

vii. Survivorship status of the parent of the student has no influence on the student's absenteeism.

viii. Distance of the Students Residence has no effect on secondary school student's absenteeism.

ix. Household size has no influence on secondary school student's absenteeism.

x. Highest education level attained by household head has no effect on Secondary school student's absenteeism.

xi. Absenteeism of the lower secondary school student is independent of the household economic status.

1.5 Scope of the Study

1.5.1 Content Scope

The research focused on examining the determinants of absenteeism among Ordinary Lower Secondary school students in Uganda after the introduction of Universal Secondary Education. It also focused on examining whether demographic factors influence absenteeism among Ordinary level secondary students; whether economic and factors influence absenteeism among Ordinary level secondary students. The research also focused on assessing whether social factors influence absenteeism among Ordinary level secondary students

1.5.2 Geographical Scope

The study looked at Secondary government Aided schools in Wakiso district. Wakiso district lies in the Central region, bordering Kampala, Mpigi district in the south west, Luwero district in the north, Nakaseke and Mityana district in the North West, and Mukono in the East and Kalangala district to the South. Wakiso covers a total area of 2,807.75 square kilometers. Wakiso district came into existence as an act of Parliament in November 2000. It was curved out of Mpigi district with the aim of improving service delivery. The district is divided into fifteen Sub-counties, four town councils (Kira, Nansana, Kakiri and Wakiso), two Municipal Divisions and two town boards (Matuga and Kyengera). This area was chosen because in the past years the district has registered high students' absenteeism and the researcher intends to assess the causes.

1.5.3 Time Scope

The time scope for this research was between the years 2007 to 2015. This is because 2007 was the year when Universal Secondary Education was introduced in Uganda and over the last couple of years, despite all the success of USE student's absenteeism is still a big problem in Uganda.

1.5.4 The Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the determinants of absenteeism among Ordinary Level Secondary school students in Uganda.

1.6 Significance of the study

Students who are absent frequently or for long periods are likely to have difficulty in mastering the material presented in class, making absenteeism a critical issue. Absenteeism is one of the reasons for student's poor grades. The findings of this study shall draw attention to the causes of school absenteeism in the lower secondary schools which are implementing Universal Secondary Education so that steps can be taken to assist the unfortunate students. The results shall enable the policy makers to restructure Universal Secondary Education and the education system in general to suit the current social, economic and demographic situation in Uganda. The findings in this study shall help policy makers make well informed decisions on Education which conflict with the household welfare.

In addition, the findings of this study will also be of great importance to academicians, it will serve as a study guide and it is intended to add to the knowledge of the researchers in this field of study. The results of this study will also provide suggestions to policy makers at the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in Uganda to come up with interventions that will enhance students' retention in schools.

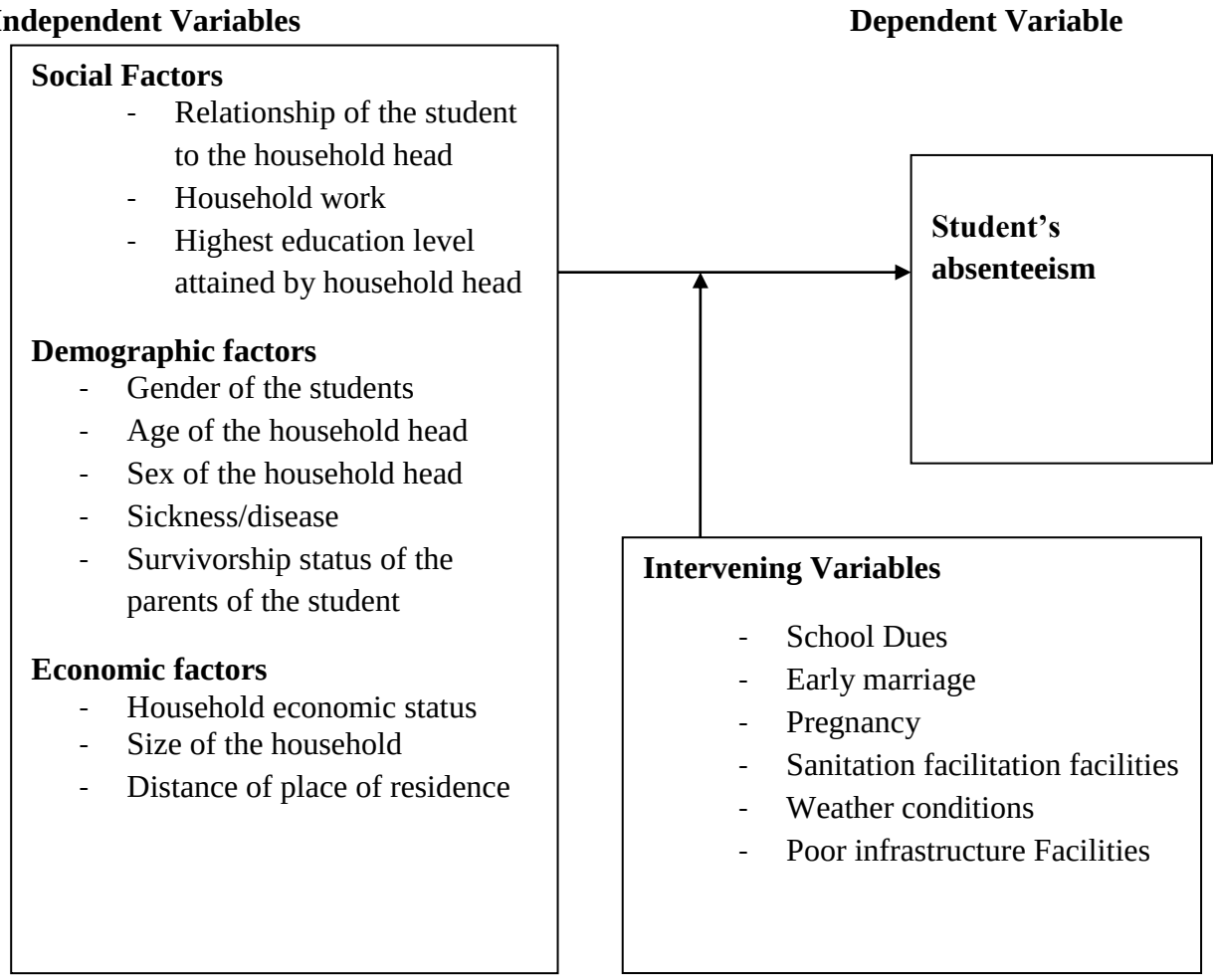
Teachers will also use the findings to assist the parents and the students to ensure that they complete secondary education and proceed onto higher institutions of learning for professional courses in larger numbers.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Absenteeism: In the context of the school, it is the habitual or intentional failure from going to school. Absenteeism cannot be denied because every now and then, students

may miss some school activities and lessons and it becomes a problem if the student is away from school for many days. The researcher considered only students who had missed more than ten (10) days from school as suffering absenteeism.

1.8 Conceptual Framework.



Source: Researchers own conceptualization

The conceptual framework explains the effect of social, economic and demographic factors on absenteeism among Ordinary level secondary students. Relationship of the pupils to the household head, survivorship status of the parent of the pupil determines

whether/or not the pupil will be provided adequately with basic school requirements like stationary, uniform and fees, hence affecting student's absenteeism. Sex of the student determines the opportunity cost to education and who will do what type of domestic work and hence determine absenteeism. Sex and age of the household head determines the magnitude of control over the children this influences student's willingness to go to school.

Household economic status determines the ability to provide a child with basic school requirements and ability to control illness for example buying mosquito nets, having protected water sources like taps and better toilet facilities hence affecting student's absenteeism. Size of the household can increase or reduce on the domestic work available and financial burden hence determine the level and value he/she holds to education. This influences attainment of school requirements, children's willingness to attend school and hence absenteeism. Residence influences accessibility of schools, pressure on children to engage in petty business to support the household (for example in domestic and agricultural duties) hence influencing absenteeism.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on Universal Secondary Education Student Absenteeism. This chapter reviews the literature on social, economic and demographic factors and the influence of student's absenteeism in Universal secondary schools among ordinary level students. There has been quite a considerable amount of literature on universal secondary Education and absenteeism both Uganda and on International scene. This chapter attempts to shade some light on what has been said.

2.1 Background

Ugandan education system is mainly based on British education system. Uganda was under British colonial rule from 1894 to 1962. Under the British rulers, some Christian missionaries started first missionary schools in Uganda in early 1890s. But education was very limited and only urban elites benefited from it. Moreover, access to education was very problematic under the colonial rule since most of the African students were denied to enroll in schools just because they are Africans (Bakuda, 1997). After getting independence from Britain in 1962, government immediately realized the importance of expanding the education to meet the national interests and needs. Government recognized illiteracy and ignorance as the main problems to tackle through education. Therefore, improving primary education was the foremost interest since access to secondary schools

required, one must attend primary school first. Ugandan government introduced several policies which helped to improve education access rapidly.

First education policy was the abolition of the racial school system which had been existed under the colonial rule and introduction of one national education system. But it did not improve the school enrollment rates significantly since financial burden remained very high for majority students. Uganda introduced 7-year primary school system in 1967 by merging 6 years primary and 2-year junior secondary school. This policy had helped to improve the access to some form of secondary education. Still in reality very few students could go beyond the primary education level due to financial burden of education even though primary school enrollment rates increased to 166% between 1964 and1982 (Moses and Caine, 2007). This is relatively low increase compare with the other east African countries like Kenya and Tanzania. During the same period Kenya and Tanzania had increased primary enrollment rates by 327% and 523% respectively (Moses and Caine, 2007).

With the success of Universal Primary Education policy, Uganda government introduced free universal secondary education policy (USE) in 2007. Uganda was the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to adopt such kind of policy. Government began to offer free secondary education to all students who passed the primary leaving examination in 2006. Selection of USE policy secondary schools has been done by Uganda government. Although most of the selected schools are public schools, there are some private secondary schools also enlisted to this policy. According to the Ministry of Education in Uganda, parents are free to send their students to any secondary school around the country. Also parents may send their children to other secondary schools that do not take

part USE policy if they can afford to pay the fees. Although students are free of paying tuition fees in USE schools, they still have to pay boarding fees, scholastic materials, medical care etc. According to ministry of education in Uganda, there are more than half a million secondary school children who are studying under the USE policy in some 1471 schools. This is a vast improvement in terms of access to secondary schools. However, the quality of education provided to Ugandan students is still a questionable even as government tries to offer new subsidies to cover the education related costs.

2.1.1 Expansion of secondary education in Sub-Saharan African countries

Access to secondary education in Sub Sahara countries is limited to a few. On average only about 30% of each age cohort completes junior secondary education and 12% senior secondary (Verspoor, 2008). Following the World Education Forum in Dakar Senegal in 2000 and the adoption of the education for all (EFA) initiative and the world millennium goals (MDGs) there is increasing demand for secondary education in most SSA countries due to the rapidly increasing primary school enrolment (Hannon, 2009). One of the greatest challenges of gaining access to secondary education in most African countries is affordability, since in a majority of the countries this level of education is not offered free by the government. This means that parents are required to meet some operational costs such as tuition and maintenance and may be required to pay for many other things including food, uniforms, learning materials, and special equipment. High level of costs borne by households becomes a barrier to the enrolment of students from poor families. Akyeampong (2005), for instance, found that in Ghana, SSE was out of reach for the

poorest 60%; and in both Uganda and Tanzania, those outside the top 25% of income would not be able to afford unsubsidized secondary education.

Many SSA countries are experiencing a rising demand for secondary education while facing the challenge of severely constrained public budgets and the countries are therefore looking for financially sustainable strategies for expanding access to those out of school as well as to lower the unit cost for those enrolled. Such strategies include: public–private partnerships; altering the structure of the system, for example integrating lower secondary into primary education or into upper secondary education; using alternative modes of delivery such as radio and internet; and improving internal efficiency by lowering the high dropout and repetition rates (Hannon, 2009). Verspoor (2008) looks into expansion of secondary education in SSA countries and notes that some countries have attempted to meet the rising demand for secondary education, while facing financial constraints, by spreading the available resources to a large number of students.

2.1.2 Universal Secondary Education in Uganda

In 1990, Uganda pledged to uphold the goals of EFA, and ten years later, in 2000, Uganda was one of the 189 countries that formally pledged to adopt the MDGs. In response to the objective stated in EFA to access to primary education, Uganda launched the UPE policy in 1997.

As Uganda's primary education system grew, pressure was exerted on the country's post-primary sector, specifically secondary education, to accommodate primary school graduates. The boost in primary school enrollment created what is referred to as the "UPE bulge" (MoES, 2008a, xi). The large numbers of children and adolescents who

benefited from UPE policy were not being readily absorbed into secondary education or the job market. Transition rates from primary to secondary school were less than 20 percent in 1997 (MoES, 2006), meaning 80 percent of primary school graduates did not move forward in the system and into secondary school. UPE was considered to be highly successful in raising primary school completion rates in Uganda.

Uganda's commitment to secondary education began in 2006, following nine years of UPE. The roots of the USE policy are political. USE was first mentioned during the presidential campaign of President Museveni in 2006. Museveni ran on a platform of universal secondary education, and he promised free post-primary education for all students who were qualified to enter secondary school.

2.1.3 The Push for Universal Secondary Education

Universal Secondary Education is a policy issue that is currently receiving much attention in circles of international development and education. Attention to the Universal Secondary Education policy can be traced to the international commitment made to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The MDGs were originally developed in 1990 and then formally adopted by 189 countries in 2000. The MDGs are very influential in determining how countries set and plan to reach educational targets, specifically those relating to primary education enrollment and completion. Much educational target setting in the developing world, following the creation of the MDGs and the original goals of EFA has focused on achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE). One of the goals of EFA is that by 2015

all children have access to free primary education. As of 2005, it was estimated that as much as 70 percent of the education budget in countries that signed the MDGs had been allotted for primary school (Lewin, 2006).

The educational focus has slowly shifted from primary completion to post-primary quality and enrollment in many MDG-signing countries. As more and more children enrolled in and completed primary school, as a result of initiatives supporting the MDGs and EFA, international educational targets switched from universal primary education to universal secondary education.

Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, however, have yet to develop long-term plans for post-primary education. To date, only one country, South Africa, has fully implemented a system of universal secondary education. Uganda is one sub-Saharan African country that recently has begun to promote secondary education. Uganda is currently implementing a policy for USE to increase development and sustain the gains in enrollment provided by UPE, in an attempt to decrease poverty and meet the Uganda's commitment to secondary education began in 2006, following nine years of UPE.

2.1.4 Access to Secondary Education

As indicated by the statistics in section 1, girl's access to education both at primary and secondary level continues to be lower than that of boys especially in rural and remote areas. Girls are more disadvantaged than boys because of gender, socio-cultural and economic issues. It has been noted that in many poor, rural and large families in Uganda, parents are reluctant to send their children especially girls to school as they provide

family labor for food production, and care of younger siblings and cultural factors among other reasons.

Notably many poor households are forced to make choices between girls and boys when it comes to accessing education. In fishing, cattle keeping and tea estate communities, the gender dimension shifts and boys are more disadvantaged in accessing both primary and secondary education as these activities have a commercial and masculine element where boys' labor is deemed more paramount and efficient as compared to girls'.

Children living in female headed households are less likely to attend school than those in male headed ones. Gender disparity in accessing education has a number of implications especially for girl children and causes them to lag behind their male counterparts. Early marriages and teenage pregnancies continue to be on the rise and these are associated with high risks of exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. The boys involved in child labour as highlighted above are also equally vulnerable. These historical trends in access to education have led to high illiteracy levels especially among adult women in the country. Overall, the adult illiteracy rate in Uganda has stagnated at 30 per cent and almost half of adult women in Uganda are illiterate compared with 23 per cent of adult men (NDP, 2010)

These issues have eventually led to low self-esteem, lack of skills and low economic power among the women. Important to note here is the fact that these disparities impact not only on the individual women but on the country at large thus leading to low output and productivity of the population.

2.1.5 Girls' education and gender equality

Despite progress in recent years, girls continue to suffer severe disadvantage and exclusion in education systems throughout their lives. Girls' education is both an intrinsic right and a critical lever to reaching other development objectives. Providing girls with an education helps break the cycle of poverty: educated women are less likely to marry early and against their will; less likely to die in childbirth; more likely to have healthy babies; and are more likely to send their children to school. When all children have access to a quality education rooted in human rights and gender equality, it creates a ripple effect of opportunity that influences generations to come.

Girls' education is essential to the achievement of quality learning relevant to the 21st century, including girls' transition to and performance in secondary school and beyond. Adolescent girls that attend school delay marriage and childbearing, are less vulnerable to disease including HIV and AIDS, and acquire information and skills that lead to increased earning power. Evidence shows that the return to a year of secondary education for girls correlates to a 25 per cent increase in wages later in life.

While gender parity has improved, barriers and bottlenecks around gender disparities and discrimination remain in place, especially at the secondary school level and among the most marginalized children.

The foremost factor limiting female education is poverty. Economics plays a key role when it comes to coping with directs costs such as tuition fees, cost of textbooks, uniforms, transportation and other expenses. Wherever, especially in families with many

children, these costs exceed the income of the family, girls are the first to be denied schooling.

There are other various barriers to girls' education throughout the world, ranging from supply-side constraints to negative social norms. Some include school fees; strong cultural norms favoring boys' education when a family has limited resources; inadequate sanitation facilities in schools such as lack of private and separate latrines; and negative classroom environments, where girls may face violence, exploitation or corporal punishment. Additionally, schools often lack sufficient numbers of female teachers.

Increasingly, adolescent girls also face economic and social demands that further disrupt their education, spanning from household obligations and child labour to child marriage, gender-based violence and female genital cutting/mutilation. Recent estimates show that one-third of girls in the developing world are married before age 18, and one-third of women in the developing world give birth before age 20. If all girls had secondary education in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, child marriage would fall by 64 per cent, from almost 2.9 million to just over 1 million. Inadequate or discriminatory legislation and policies often inhibit girls' equal access to quality education. In countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, formal or written threats to close girls' schools or end classes for girls have fueled gender motivated attacks on schools.

2.2 Causes of Students' Absenteeism in Secondary Schools

2.2.1 Social factors

Relationship of the student to the household head

If a child is a daughter or son to the household head is likely to get all schooling requirements and his/her school attendance will be high unlike for his/her counterparts. Research done by Konate, Gueye and Nseka (2003) reveals that relationship to the household head has an impact on pupil's school absenteeism in a way that children of the head of household are usually favored over others in the household (i.e. those fostered, entrusted to the family and those living in it with parents other than the heads of household).

Household work

At least two million children aged five to 17 absent themselves from school because of child labour. The first Child Labour report released by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) reveals. The report, unveiled at Statistics House in Kampala, reveals that the two million child laborers accounted for 16% of the entire children's population of 11.5 million in Uganda. According to the report, child labour is among the major causes of absenteeism at school. It also points to child labour as an obstacle to achieving universal primary education and USE.

"Children who are forced out of school to help supplement their families' incomes are denied the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to aid them get

decent employment in future. This ties them down in a cycle of poverty," the report reads.

Household chores, the study noted, also formed an integral part of the daily work of a Ugandan child with 65% of children engaged household chores. However, girls were more likely to perform household chores than boys and more children in rural areas undertook household chores (66%) than their urban peers (58%) and this greatly causes absenteeism at school (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). This is significantly evident in poor, rural households and those with large families which require children's labour for food production and for care of younger siblings. In addition, Balfanz & Byrnes, (2012) says; family obligations also make some students not go to school. As children enter early adolescence, family responsibilities can keep them from school. In high poverty environments, young adolescent girls sometimes provide emergency day care for younger siblings or are responsible for getting younger children to school. This rhyme well with Wadesango, (2011) study which found that; students experience absenteeism that has a socioeconomic character which makes them to seek for part-time employment, general upkeep, tuition fees, and renting fees instead of applying themselves fully to their studies. Plank, et al, as cited by Balfanz & Byrnes, (2012) adds that; there is a growing evidence of even young adolescents taking on elder care responsibilities in single parent, multi-generational households. Adolescents, moreover, are sometimes pulled into helping with the family business or working to enable family or personal survival. In other cases, they are compelled or lured into illegal activities. Students who become involved in the juvenile justice system then often miss additional days of schools while being detained, going to court, and transitioning back into school.

Highest education level attained by the household head

Literate household heads are not only likely than illiterate ones to enroll their daughters and sons in school, but also to ensure that the school attendance of their children is regular. Literate household heads feel it is profitable to educate their children and look at sending their children to school as a wise investment for the future unlike illiterate ones. Literate household heads will do whatever is required for the child not to miss school like providing scholastic materials, paying fees in time. To the illiterate parents education is perceived to be of limited worth when after completion of school (Secondary), there is no substantial difference between someone who has been to school and one who hasn't. Some researchers indicate that non-educated parents cannot provide the support or often do not appreciate the benefits of schooling (Juneja, 2001; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003), children of such parents/household heads will be more absent than those of educated ones.

The household head is a role model to the rest of the household members (Hunter & May, 2003); heads that are educated are likely to inspire schooling children to attain high qualifications like theirs. And one way to achieve this is regular attendance of school. Therefore, pupil from households headed by uneducated heads lack education role model and are more likely to be absent from school than households of educated heads.

2.2.2 Demographic factors

Sex of the Student

Boys absent themselves from school more than girls despite the fact that in Uganda Secondary schools there are more girls than boys this was revealed by the rapid head count in Secondary schools (MoEs, 2009). According to UBOS and Micro International Inc. (2007) report, it showed that male pupils missed school more than female pupils. However, this is in contradiction with the findings of the research done by Runhare and Gordon (2004) in Zimbabwe that found out that there was higher absenteeism among girls than boys because of economic hardships, negative cultural and socialization factors, and HIV/AIDS related factors and over burdening household chores.

Studies have indicated the preference many household have for the education of boys over girls, with girls' education often deemed less important (Admassie, 2003; Boyle, Brock, Mace & Sibbons, 2002 suggest that households in their study tended to see boy's education bringing greater future economic rewards, which was not be the case with girls. Indeed, educating a girl is often seen as a poor investment because the girl will marry and leave home, bringing the benefits of education to the husband's family rather than to her own. Similarly, in Guinea parents mentioned that primary schooling was irrelevant to girl's future roles. In such cases girls will not be facilitated with schooling necessities like boys and will end up being absent than boys.

Boys in Guinea undertaking initiation ceremonies had primary schooling disrupted, with ceremonies sometimes taking in term time, absenteeism lasting up to one month, while for girls it was often considered 'shameful' for them to return to school (colclough et al.,

2000). This move into adulthood at times means that 'new' adults adult can think themselves too grown up for schooling. Nekatibeb (2002) describes how communities in Ethiopia accept these girls as 'adults', but teachers or schools continue to consider them as children and this may create tension.

Girls as they grow, they experience puberty changes that are more likely to increase absenteeism than boys for example getting attracted to men and using school time to meet them since it is the only chance they have as they are still staying with their parents/guardians. It is during primary schooling when girls start their menstruation. UNICEF (2005) estimates that 1 in 10 school-age menstruating African girls skip school four to five days per month or drop out completely because of lack of sanitation facilitation facilities. In Uganda, many disadvantaged menstruating primary school girls who lack sanitary towels decide to stay at home for the days the menstrual cycle lasts due to fear of inconveniences.

Age of the house hold head

Household head's age contributes to absenteeism in a way that absenteeism is high in households where the head is child or very old unlike in those ones headed by mid-adults. This is because household heads that are children or grandparents don't usually exert enough control over the children. A study done in Malawi by Chimombo et al. (2000) revealed that in some areas a lot of night activities such as dances and initiation ceremonies contributed to absenteeism from school. It was noted that some girls and boys as young as 15 years would spend the whole night out with little interference from the

grandparents or these children were sleeping separately in their own huts. Such children would get so tied that would not attend classes the following day.

Sex of the household head

In Households headed by a male, boys and girls are likely to have similar school attendance patterns whereas in those headed by females, boys are likely to be absent than girls. Men tend to exert enough control on children as far as school attendance is corned more than women. Therefore, if the household head is a male, pupil absenteeism is likely to be low compared to female headed households.

Sickness/chronic illness

Balfanz & Byrnes, (2012) asserts illness as the major cause of student absenteeism in secondary schools. Annual colds, flu, malaria and assorted other childhood ailments clearly contribute to school absenteeism. In their most recent federal survey, whose results indicate fewer than 6 percent of children miss more than 11 days due to illness or injury. In practice, however, particularly in high-poverty areas, the medical care needed to enable students with chronic conditions, such as asthma, to attend school regularly are not always available at the scale and intensity required, (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012).

Students who are chronically absent miss out on valuable instruction time.

This makes it difficult for them to keep up academically. Their absences can also affect the learning pace of their classmates, as teachers must try to bring absent students up to speed, while teaching to a different set of children in the classroom each day.

Survivorship status of the parents of the Student

Presence of a pupil's parents alive has an impact on his/her absenteeism, particularly in poorer communities. Grant and Hallman's (2006) research on education access in South Africa shows children living with mothers were significantly less likely to have absented from school relative to those mothers were living elsewhere or whose mothers were dead.

Recent studies done in Burundi show that attendance rates vary by category of orphans (Guarcello, Lyon & Rosati, 2004). Paternal orphans attended schools in greater proportions than maternal orphans; male orphans were more likely to attend school than female orphans. Double orphans are less likely to attend school full-time in combination with work than non-orphans. Being a single orphan reduced the probability of attending school full-time by 11 percentage points, and of attending school in combination with work by four percentage points. However, research done in Tanzania by Ainsworth et al. (2005) attempted to measure the impact of adult deaths and orphan status on primary school attendance and hours spent at school. There was no statistically significant difference in attendance rates by orphan status. Often children dealing with bereavement have to move into foster care. Not only are they dealing with the trauma of this bereavement, but they often have to move households and schools. This disrupts schooling patterns and can be linked to periods of absenteeism.

In many societies, in Africa in particular, a large number of children are fostered estimated to be 25% of children (Zimmerman, 2003). There can be both positive and negative effects of fostering on educational access. In many cases children are fostered in order to allow them greater educational access. In many cases children are fostered in order to allow them greater educational opportunities. However, based on an analysis of

black South African, Zimmerman (2003) claimed foster children were no less likely than non-orphans to attend school. School attendance is highest for fostered children in Burundi (Guarcello et al., 2004), compared to children living with their immediate family. This suggests that children are often being fostered in order to get better educational opportunity.

2.2.3 Economic factors

Household Socio-economic status

Ownership of a radio and television enables access to efficient communication this can help pupils to see and listen to highly qualified people like doctors and be inspired to study to be like them, electricity in a house hold is a sign of good economic status. Availability of brick walls is a sign of safety in the home and well-off. ownership of a farm of animals that increase the demand for the child labor and type of water source that can contribute to water contamination between household's wealth index the student's rates of absenteeism.

Size of the Household

How many members are within the household is important in many cases and can be a 'significant determinant' of absenteeism. But research differs on the impact of household size on absenteeism. Some studies indicate that with larger household size (and in particular numbers of children) the financial burden/potential workload is great; children are less likely to attend school. However, with more children in the household, jobs can be spread between them and siblings more likely to attend, e.g. in Ethiopia (Colcough et

al., 2000). Research in Pakistan indicates that while an increase in family size reduces a girl child's household work, the presence of young children appears to increase their workload (Hakzira & Bedi, 2003). As in other studies, the number of siblings under 5 years of age has a strongly negative impact on older girls' schooling and leads to absenteeism.

Distance of the student's residence from school

Despite the increased number of secondary schools both government and private implementing USE programme long distance to school is still a challenge to students. Students move very long distance to school, which makes them tired. It takes long for them to settle in class and they may not concentrate on school attendance. According to Komakech & Osuu, (2014) in their findings. They found out that long distance to school contributed to 7.6% of student's absenteeism from school and that some learners covered up to ten (10) kilometres walking to school. This made them too tired to concentrate in class. They equally learnt few subjects each day because they most of the times reached school late which made them perform poorly at school.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that was used in the study; it describes the research design, area of study population, sampling techniques and sample size, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, and quality control among others.

3.1 Research Design

A case study design was used because Wakiso district represents most of the areas in Uganda. Soy (1997) observed that a case study design excels at bringing to us understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend or add strength to what is already known through previous research. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches/methods. A quantitative approach was adopted in order to allow the researcher to gather more precise and quantifiable information on the causes and effects of absenteeism while the qualitative methodology was also appropriate to this study because it allowed the researchers to get the data directly from the subjects themselves by sitting with the respondents and hear their views, voices, perceptions and expectations in detail. Thus, the researcher recognized several nuances of attitude and behaviour that could escape researchers using

other methods. A case study design was used for this study to provide a detailed understanding of how the social, economic and demographic factors contribute to Students' absenteeism in the Lower Secondary Schools. The quantitative research methods allowed the researcher to test theories by finding the relationship among variables.

Data was collected through structured interviews from students in the randomly selected Universal Secondary schools and Key informant interviews conducted with the head teachers, Class teachers and the DEO in Wakiso district.

3.2 Area of Study

Wakiso district lies in the Central region, bordering Kampala, Mpigi, Luwero, Nakaseke and Mityana Districts in the North; Mukono in the East and Kalangala district to the South. Wakiso covers a total area of 2,807.75 square kilometers. Wakiso district came into existence as an act of Parliament in November 2000. It was curved out of Mpigi district with the aim of improving service delivery.

The district currently has a total population of 2,007,700 (2014 Census) compared to the 2002 Population and Housing Census which stood at 1,315,300 people with a growth rate of 4.1%. The population density is 323 persons per square kilometer. The biggest proportion at 92% of the district population live in the rural areas compared to 8% living in urban areas. The rural population is mainly concentrated in the sub counties of Kakiri, Katabi, Masulita, Namayumba, Nsangi, Ssisa, Busukuma, Gombe and Nabweru. The urban population is mainly concentrated in Makindye, Wakiso Town Council, Kira Town Council and Entebbe municipality.

The introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) brought an increase in the school enrolment over the years. There was an increase of 20% in enrolment in UPE schools between 2002 and 2005. This was partly because of the improved infrastructure in terms of classrooms, furniture and toilet facilities. About 73% of the households can access a primary school within a distance of 1km, while only 4%, move more than 5km to access a primary school. (Wakiso DDP 2011-2015)

USE (Universal Secondary Education) status 2007: 38,770 males, 142,368 females totaling to 81,138 students and in 2008 there were 5,024 males, 5,330 females totaling to 10,324, while 2009 males were 4,990 and 6,315 females totaling to 11,305 students. However, it should be noted that Secondary education is basically centralized. (Wakiso DDP 2011-2015)

3.3 Study Population

The subjects of the research were male and female students in Ordinary in the purposively sampled sub counties of Wakiso district and teachers form the sampled schools. Purposive sampling was selected because of the characteristics of the study population. The criterion for inclusion in the study is tied to attendance in selected classes in the school.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

In total, 468 students (202 male and 266 female) from lower secondary classes were included in the quantitative portion of the study, along with 12 teachers who were included in the qualitative portion. Sample size was arrived at using Krejcie and Morgan Tables and the Sample size calculations were conducted on a number of key outcomes of interest based on prior research (at 5% level of significance) and these indicated that this sample size was sufficient to capture anticipated information, particularly those based on knowledge. The study used both purposive and stratified sampling to select the sample. The main instrument that was used to solicit for information was the questionnaire. Self-administered questionnaires with open- ended and closed questions were used for data collection.

Research Assistants were used to distribute the questionnaires and the number of returned questionnaires were 468 giving a response rate at (100%). Interviews were also held with some District Education Offers, Political and CSOs leaders and Teachers. Through the use of interviews, the researcher was able to elaborate on issues and questions as well as clarifying the meaning of statements, answers or questions that may not have been clear to the interviewee

The field data was statistically analysed using descriptive statistics and narrative summary analyses. Furthermore, in this study; confidentiality ethic was adhered by using secret codes for all interview transcripts and identity of the participants were concealed. The research was therefore conducted with respect and concern for the dignity and welfare of the informants.

3.5 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The study used both primary and secondary data collection methods. The primary data collection involved the use of self-administered questionnaire and Key informant interview. The secondary data collection method involved the use of books, journals, internet, magazines, and newspapers among others.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is an instrument which is used in the collection of mainly quantitative data using both closed and open ended items. The questionnaire contained closed and open ended questions. The respondents fill in the questionnaire at their own time of convenience. Henn et al. (2006) indicates that an open ended question is one where the researcher asks the question and leaves a blank space for the respondent to record their responses. These questions are good because they do not force the respondent into a predetermined category of answers and also give the respondent greater freedom of expression.

3.5.2 Interviews

An interview is a face to face verbal exchange of ideas between the researcher and the study respondent on any variable under investigation. This method involved use of an interview guide in order to gather information. The interviews were held with the District Education Offers, Political and CSOs leaders and Teachers. The study used an interview guide because it helps generate detailed and in depth information especially if probing is

adequately done. In addition to this interviews guarantee an immediate feedback and give in depth information.

3.6 Quality Control Methods

The researcher conducted a pilot study in order to ensure quality of the data obtained in the study. The researcher pre-tested the instruments that were used to obtain the necessary data from the respondents though at different times, but with the same results.

3.7 Data Management and Processing

The data collected resulted into big sums of information. It was arranged according to the different themes the researcher formulated in line with the objectives.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data that was collected during the interviews was also presented and discussed in a descriptive way, with some statistical analysis from the respondents. Qualitative studies amassed a lot of raw data that the researcher needed. This helped the researcher to condense the information that was gathered into a manageable and meaningful work.

The researcher also found meaningful patterns where by the researcher obtained themes in the data by analyzing the content. These themes were created prior to data collection basing on the research objectives. This involved coding the data for common words. The

researcher labeled words, sections and phrases and also drew their meanings as according to the research questions.

Content analysis was used to test the authenticity of the information. Triangulation was carried out to ensure that the information the researcher got from the field is the right information. Quantitative data from the questionnaire was first cleaned and edited for any irregularity. The few open-ended questions were first coded into mutually exclusive categories. Data was then entered into the computer using Epi -Data analysis soft ware. Data was then exported into the Statistical Package for Social Scientists -SPSS version 21 for eventual analysis. Descriptive statistics mainly using tables and charts have been utilized in the presentation information generated.

3.8.1 Quantitative Component

The quantitative survey included sections on background characteristics (for example. age, parent's employment status, and family structure), absence from school ever since start of the current academic year, sex of the student (male, female), Sex of household (Male, female), Relationship of pupil to the household head (Head, Son/Daughter, Grandchild, Brother/sister, Niece/nephew, Other relative, Adopted/foster/stepchild), Survivorship status of the parents of the student (Double Orphan, Single Orphan, Not orphan), Age of household head (Less than 30, 30-49, above 49), Highest education level of household head (No education, Primary education, Secondary education, Higher education), Distance of the school from home, Household social-economic status (Poorest, poorer, middle, richer, richest), Household size (7 members and below, above 7 members)

3.9 Description of Variables

The dependent variable is absenteeism among Ordinary level secondary students. Absenteeism from school refers to absence (non-attendance) from school. School absenteeism is of two types, namely: authorized absence and unauthorized absence. Authorized absence is an absence with permission from the teacher or other authorized representative of the school. This includes instances of absence for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided (for example Family bereavement, religious observance) while an unauthorized absence is absence without permission from a teacher or other authorized representative of the school.

3.9.1 Independent Variables

Relationship of the Student to the Household head

This is a categorical variable with categories namely; other relative, son/daughter, grandchild, brother/sister, niece/nephew, adopted/foster/step child.

Household Work

This is a categorical variable with two categories, that is, yes and No.

Highest Education level attained by the household

This is a categorical variable with categories, namely No education, Primary, Secondary and more than Secondary.

Gender of the student

This is a categorical variable with two categories, that is, male and female.

Age of the house hold head

This is a categorical into three groups, that is, less than 30, 30-49 and more than 49.

Sex of the household head

This is a categorical variable with two categories, that is, males and females.

Sickness/chronic disease

This is a categorical variable with two categories, that is, yes and No.

Survivorship status of the parents of the student

This is a categorical variable with categories, namely: double orphan, single orphan and not orphan.

Household Socio –economic status

This is a categorical variable with categories, Poorest, poorer, middle, richer and richest.

Size of the Household

This variable is categorized into two groups, namely; 7 members and below and more than 7 members.

Distance of the student's Residence from School

This is a categorical variable with categories, namely: Less than 2km and more than 2km.

3.10 Univariate Analysis

Univariate analysis was carried out with the description of a single variable in terms of the applicable unit of analysis. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the characteristics in the selected secondary schools. Frequency tables were used to summarize all the independent variables through frequency distribution of the individual cases, which involves presenting the number of cases in the sample that fall into each category of values of the variable. This was done in a table format. In addition to frequency distribution, univariate analysis will involve reporting measures of central tendency (location). This involved describing the way in which quantitative data tend to cluster around some value.

3.11 Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate analysis was conducted to establish the association between student's absenteeism in secondary Education and independent categorical variables. Cross – tabulation was done and the association between absenteeism among secondary students and the categorical independent variables were discussed. The test for significance between the dependent and independent variables was done using the student's t-test statistical hypothesis test. This was used to determine if two sets of data are significantly different from each other.

Assumptions

The assumptions underlying a *t*-test were that

- X follows a normal distribution with mean μ and variance σ^2 Where X is the sample Mean.
- s^2 follows a χ^2 distribution with p degrees of freedom under the null hypothesis, where p is a positive constant
- Z and s are independent. Where Z are the Z scores.
- The formula for T test is given below:

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

Where,

$\bar{x}_1$ = Mean of first set of value

$\bar{x}_2$ = Mean of second set of values

s_1 = Standard deviation of first set of values

s_2 = Standard deviation of second set of value

n_1 = Total Number of values in the first set

n_2 = Total Number of values in the second set

With the T- test, the analysis was based on the p-value of 0.05 as the level of significance. The probability of rejecting/accepting the hypothesis being tested. If the p-value is greater than or 0.05, then the statistical relationship between Student's absenteeism and independent variable under study was not significant. On the other hand, if the p-value was found to be less than 0.05, then, there was a significant statistical relationship between the two variables such that if one of them changed, the other would also change. The linear regression model was also run to determine the adjusted R squared.

3.12 Multivariate Analysis

The multivariate analysis was used to establish the relationship between absenteeism among lower secondary students (dependent variable) and several independent variables. Multiple linear regression analysis is an extension of simple linear regression analysis, used to assess the association between two or more independent variables and a single continuous dependent variable. The multiple linear regression equation is as follows:

$$y = b_0 + b_1 x_1 + b_2 x_2 + \ldots + b_p x_p + \varepsilon$$

Where **y** is the predicted or expected value of the dependent variable, x_1 through x_p are p distinct independent or predictor variables, b_0 is the value of y when all of the independent variables (x_1 through x_p) are equal to zero (a constant), and b_1 through b_p are the estimated regression coefficients and ε is the error term. Each regression

coefficient represents the change in y relative to a one-unit change in the respective independent variable. In the multiple regression situations, b_1, for example, is the change in y relative to a one-unit change in x_1, holding all other independent variables constant (that is to say, when the remaining independent variables are held at the same value or are fixed).

Linear regression makes several key assumptions:

- Linear relationship
- Multivariate normality
- No or little multicollinearity
- No auto-correlation
- Homoscedasticity

3.13 Quality Assurance

Control measures were used to ensure quality of data collected, analyzed and reported. Pre-testing of tools was done to verify appropriateness and relevancy of questions included in the data collection tools to collect relevant information on selected objectives.

3.14 Ethical considerations

The researcher was ethical by treating information objectively and respected each respondent's views. The researcher also respected and protected their interests by not disclosing their information if they needed it to be kept confidential. Participants and the data gained from them was kept anonymous and no names were used the report.

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from Uganda Martyrs University seeking for permission to carry out research in Wakiso district. Where appointments were needed, these were drawn with the selected respondents to set their own convenient time of participating in the data collection exercise. The questionnaires were instantly collected by the researcher as soon as they were filled to manage time and avoid loss or misplacement. The researcher also wrote down major points which were accrued from the interviewing exercise.

The researcher ensured protection of participants taking part in the research. The researcher made sure that no participant was caused distress or harm during the data collection and that they were free not to participate if they felt that the research was violating their rights. The researcher also informed the respondents that the information is valuable and confidential and only for academic purposes.

3.15 Limitation of the Study

Even with guaranteed anonymity some respondents were at first uneasy when it came to filling the questionnaire. This is because much as their names were not necessary for the questionnaire, it was necessary for them to put the name on the form of consent guaranteeing their willing participation in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The analysis was done at three levels, namely: univariate, bivariate, multivariate and these findings were presented in accordance to themes that were derived from the objectives.

4.1 School Coverage

The study used a total of 6 schools out of the 18 Government Aided schools in Wakiso district. These are shown in the Table 4.1 in which it can be seen that 3 are from the rural area and 3 are from an urban area or peri- urban area. The total number of schools are also shown in the table.

Table 4.1: School Coverage by Sub County

Name of School	**Sub County**
Nsangi Secondary School	Nsangi Sub County
Jjungo Secondary School	Kasanje Sub County
Balibaseka Secondary School	Kakiri Sub County
Kitala Secondary School	Kitabi Sub County
Masulita Secondary School	Masulita Sub County
Nampunge Community School	Kakiri Sub County

4.2 Preliminary Findings and Univariate Analysis

Table 4.2 Gender of the Student

Gender of the Student	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	202	43.2
Female	266	56.8
Total	**468**	**100.0**

4.2.1: Gender of the Student

The research included both boys and girls in the 6 selected Secondary Schools without discrimination. The researcher also administered 468 questionnaires to both boys and girls of which they were all responded to.

Table 4.3 Percentage distribution of absenteeism among the Students

Student Absenteeism from School	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Less than 10 Times	268	57.3
More than 10 Times	200	42.7
Total	468	100.0

4.2.2: Percentage distribution of absenteeism among the Students

The table above shows that 42.7% of the students missed more than 10 times of the school days compared to 57.3% who missed less than 10 times. The researcher in the analysis only took students who had missed school more than 10 times ever since the academic year stated. The researcher defined Absenteeism as missing 8% percent or more of school days; in practical terms this translates into 10 days a year.

Table 4.4 Percentage distribution of Students who missed school because they had to stay at home and do household work/take care of siblings

stayed home to take care of siblings/do household chores	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Yes	120	25.6
No	348	74.4
Total	468	100.0

4.2.3: Percentage distribution of Students who missed school because they had to stay at home and do household work/take care of siblings

The researcher discovered that 25.6% of the students had been absent from school during school days because they hard to stay home to take care of siblings/do household chores or house work e.g. farming, looking after animals, washing clothes, plates and caps.

Table 4.5 Percentage distribution of Students who missed school because they had to work in the field or market

Worked (field/market)	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Yes	115	24.6
No	353	75.4
Total	468	100.0

4.2.4: Percentage distribution of Students who missed school because they had to work in the field or market

24.6% of the students missed school because they had to work in the field and the market. The respondents though Focus group discussion said that they were forced by their parents and guardian to go and work instead of attending school.

Table 4.6 Percentage distribution of Students who missed school because of sickness/chronic illness.

Missed School because of Sickness	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Yes	297	63.5
No	155	33.1
Missed Only some class	14	3.0
Don't know	2	0.4
Total	468	100.0

4.2.5: Percentage distribution of Students who missed school because of sickness/chronic illness.

The study found out that 63.5% of the students had missed school because of sickness and chronic illness. From figure 4.1, the common sickness noted was malaria contributing to 38.7% of the total illness, fever contributing 21.08%, Headache

contributing 15.2%, Cough contributing 5.8%, flue and cold contributing to 5.15%, Diarrhea contributing 3.92% and wounds contributing 2.7%.

Figure 4.1 Percentage distribution of common sickness/Illness

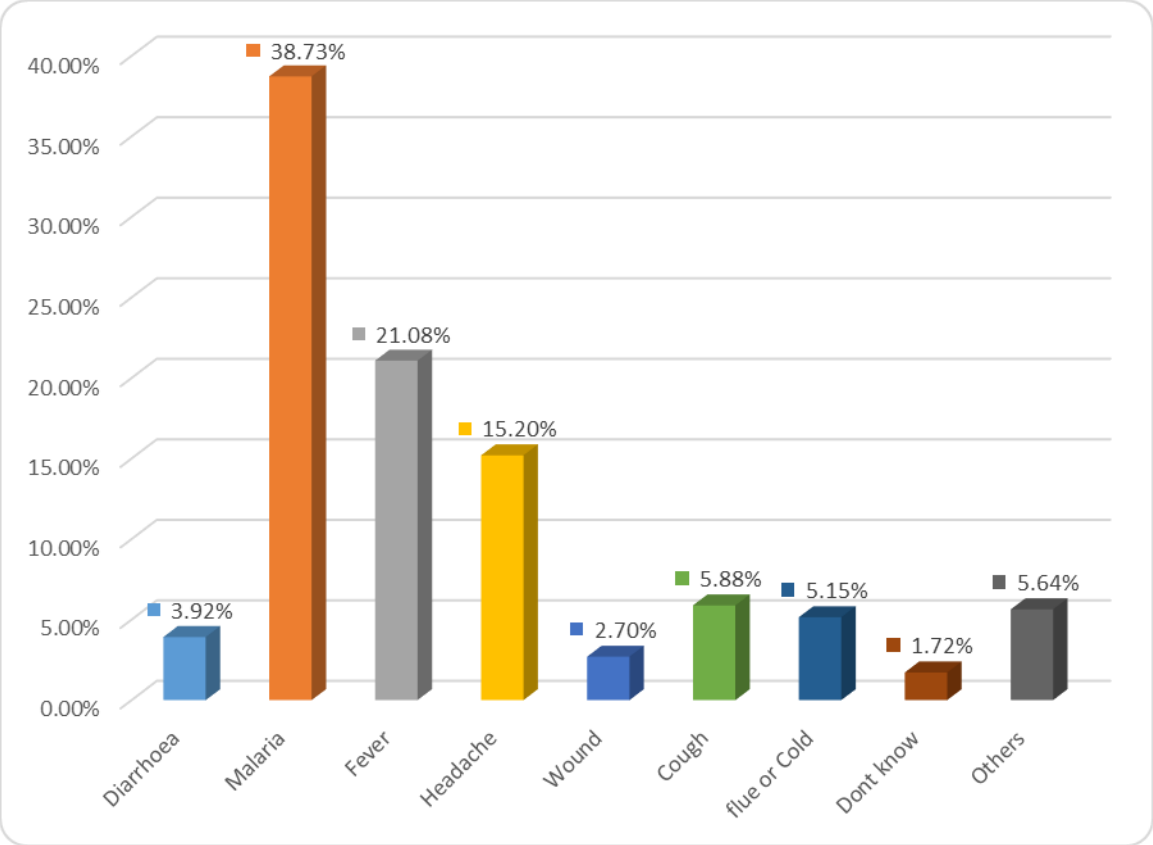


Table 4.7 Percentage distribution of Age and Sex of household head or Family Head

Age of Household	Sex of the household head or family head	
	Male	**Female**
Less than 30 years	4%	2%
30-49 years	34.8%	17.3%
More than 49 years	17.7%	15.9%
Don't know	4.3%	3.2%
Total	61.1%	38.9%

4.2.6: Percentage distribution of Age and Sex of household head or Family Head

Table 4.7 shows that the majority of the students interviewed come from household where the head of the house hold is male and between the ages of 30-49 years. 17.3% of the students come from household where the house hold head is a female with ages of 30-49. It can be noted that the house hold head that is between 30 -49 years of age has enough strength to look after the family and buy the school requirements.

Table 4.8 Percentage distribution of the Relationship of student to the household head

Relationship of the Student to the Household head/family head	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Son/daughter	277	59
Grandchild	55	11.8
Brother/sister	49	10.5
Niece/nephew	20	4.3
Adopted/foster/stepchild	34	7.3
Other relatives	33	7.1
Total	**468**	**100.0**

4.2.7: Percentage distribution of the Relationship of student to the household head

According to Table 4.8 59.2% of the students interviewed were either sons or daughters to the household head, 11.8% were grand children to the household heads, 10.5% were found to be brother or sisters to the household heads, 4.3% were niece or nephew to the household head, 7.3% were adopted and 7.1% were other relative.

Table 4.9 Percentage distribution of the Survivorship status of the parent of the student

Survivorship status of the parent of the student	Frequency	Percentage
Double Orphan	38	8.1
Single Orphan	153	32.7
Not orphan	264	56.4
Don't Know	8	1.7
others	5	1.1
Total	**468**	**100.0**

4.2.8: Percentage distribution of the Survivorship status of the parent of the student

In this study, it was found out that 56.4% of the students were had both their mothers and fathers alive, 32.7% were found out to be single orphans that is to say, neither mother or father had dead, 8.1% were found to be double orphans where both biological mother and father had died.

Table 4.10 Percentage distribution of the distance of the Students Residence from the school

Distance of the Students Residence from the school	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
less than 2km	166	35.5
More than 2km	302	64.5
Total	468	100

4.2.9: Percentage distribution of the distance of the Students Residence from the school

The study found out that among the students interviewed, 64.5% live more than 2KM from the Secondary school and 35.5% live less than 2km from the Secondary school.

Table 4.11 Percentage distribution of the Student's Household size

	Frequency	Percentage
7mebers & below	262	56.0
more than 7 members	174	37.2
don't know	22	4.7
others	10	2.1
Total	468	100.0

4.2.10: Percentage distribution of the Student's Household size

Table 4.11 above shows that the majority of the students come from the households with below 7 members accounting to 56.0%, 37.2% of the students come from households where the house hold members are more than 7 members.

Table 4.12 Percentage distribution of highest education level attained by household head.

Highest Education level attained by household head	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
No education	25	5.3
Primary level	122	26.1
Secondary Level	153	32.7
Certificate/diploma	74	15.8
Degree	49	10.5
Don't Know	45	9.6
Total	**468**	**100.0**

4.2.11: Percentage distribution of highest education level attained by household head.

The study further found out that 32.7% of the students come from the household where the house hold head have secondary level as the highest level of education attained, 26.1% have primary education as the highest level of education, 15.8% have Certificate

or diploma as the highest level of education, 10.5% have Degree as the highest level of education and 5.3% have no education at all.

Table 4.13 Percentage distribution of the Student's household economic status

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Poorest family	56	12.0
Poorer family	152	32.5
Middle class family	197	42.1
Richer family	34	7.3
Richest family	11	2.4
Don't know	18	3.9
Total	**468**	**100.0**

4.2.12: Percentage distribution of the Student's household economic status.

The study also found out that the majority of the students interviewed are from middle class family (42.1%), middle class comprises of households that have Brick walls, iron sheet roof (as defined by the author), radio and cell phone. 32.5% are from poorer family and this comprises of household that have Mud or unburnt brick and radio. 12% are from poorest families, and poorest families comprise of grass roof and radio. 7.3% are from richer families comprising of brick walls, iron sheet roof, electricity, TV, cell phone and 2.4% are from richest families comprising of brick walls, iron sheet roof, Refrigerator, Electricity, TV, radio and Cell phone.

4.3 Bivariate Analysis

Table 4.14 Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by gender of the Ordinary level secondary school student

	Gender of respondent/student				
Absenteeism	Male	Female	**P>|t|**	**R-squared**	**Adj R-squared**
	98 (24.4%)	102 (25.4%)	0.014	0.1263	0.1241

4.3.1: Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by gender of the Ordinary level secondary school student

The study found out that 24.4% of the students that suffered absenteeism were male and that 25.4% of the students that suffered absenteeism were female. The study further found out that the association between gender of the student and student absenteeism was significant (p= 0.014). These finding are in agreement with the findings of the research done by Runhare and Gordon (2004) in Zimbabwe that found out that there was higher absenteeism among girls than boys because of economic hardships, negative cultural and socialization factors, and HIV/AIDS related factors and over burdening household chores. It is also in agreement with studies that have indicated the preference many household have for the education of boys over girls, with girls' education often deemed less important (Admassie, 2003; Boyle, Brock, Mace & Sibbons, 2002. Boyle et al. (2002) suggest that households in their study tended to see boy's education bringing greater future economic rewards, which is not the case with girls.

Table 4.15 Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Household work/Child labor

	Missed school because of Household work	**P>|t|**	**R-squared**	**Adj R-squared**
Absenteeism	83 (32.8%)	0.000	0.0796	0.0759

4.3.2: Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Household work

Results in Table 4.15 show that 32.8% of the students suffered school absenteeism because they had to stay home and take care of siblings/do household chores or house work e.g. farming, looking after animals, washing clothes, plates and caps. The study further found out that the association between students staying home to do household and student absenteeism was highly significant (p= 0.000). In rural areas students have to wake up very early in the morning and go to the garden, fetch enough water for use, teeter animals (cattle, goats, pigs), then prepare for school depending on the time the task is accomplished and sometimes are told to remain to do the construction work. While urban students have tasks of washing utensils, mopping the house and preparing breakfast for family before leaving for school.

According to the one of the Education Officer in Wakiso district explained that; "Agriculture is the back-bone of the peasant economy, and during the rainy season all efforts are geared towards food production for survival." In addition a Student from Kasaje Sub county said that; "At least every Friday I have to be out of school by going to fishing to earn some money to cater for my breakfast, lunch, and personal requirements

like exercise books, pens, calculators, school uniforms, shoes as my parents pay for fees." These reasons are critical because it will lead to poor performance in class, drop out and waste of government fund and as a result it will affect the government objectives of increasing access to quality secondary education. These findings are in agreement with Balfanz & Byrnes, (2012) says; family obligations also make some students not go to school. As children enter early adolescence, family responsibilities can keep them from school. In high poverty environments, young adolescent girls sometimes provide emergency day care for younger siblings or are responsible for getting younger children to school.

Table 4.16 Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Sickness/chronic illness

	Missed school because of Sickness/Chronic illness	**P>|t|**	**R-squared**	**Adj R-squared**
Absenteeism	171 (46.85%)	0.004	0.0230	0.0203

4.3.3: Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Sickness/chronic illness

The results in table 4.16 show that 46.85% of the students interviewed suffered absenteeism because of sickness or chronic illness. The study further found out that the

association between sickness and chronic illness and student absenteeism was highly significant (p= 0.004). This finding is in agreement with Balfanz & Byrnes, (2012) who asserts illness as the major cause of student absenteeism in secondary schools. Annual colds, flu, malaria and assorted other childhood ailments clearly contribute to school absenteeism.

Table 4.17 Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Age of household head

	Age of the house hold head or family Head					
	Less than 30 years	30-49 years	More than 49 years	**P>|t|**	**R-squared**	**Adj R-squared**
Absenteeism	11(2.8%)	93(23.4%)	89 (22.4%)	0.000	0.1415	0.1393

4.3.4: Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Age of household head

The study shown that 23.4% of the students that suffered absenteeism were from families where the household head was between 30-49 years of age, 22.4% of the students that suffered absenteeism were from families where the house head was more than 49 years of age. The study further found out that the association between Age of the household head and student absenteeism was highly significant (p= 0.000).

Table 4.18 Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Sex of household head

	Sex of the household head or family head				
	Male	Female	**P>|t|**	**R-squared**	**Adj R-squared**
Absenteeism	116 (29%)	83 (20.8%)	0.370	0.0020	-0.0005

4.3.5: Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Sex of household head

The researcher made efforts to determine the association between sex of the household head and absenteeism among primary school pupils. It is believed that sex of the household head is associated with pupil absenteeism. The findings in this study showed that 29% of the students who suffered absenteeism were from male headed households and 20.8% from female headed households suffered absenteeism. Students from male headed households were more absent than those from female headed, this is because female heads tend to be more responsible and exert more control as far as school attendance is concerned. The study further found out that the association between sex of the household head and student absenteeism was not significant (p= 0.370), hence there is no significant effect of sex of the household head on student absenteeism.

Table 4.19 Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by relationship of student to the household head

Relationship to the Household head/family head	**Absenteeism** Number and Percentage Absent	**P>|t|**	**R-squared**	**Adj R-squared**
Son/daughter	118 (61.1%)	0.907	0.0000	-0.0025
grandchild	23 (11.9%)			
brother/sister	15 (7.8%)			
niece/nephew	10 (5.3%)			
adopted/foster/stepchild	27 (13.9%)			

4.3.6: Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by relationship of student to the household head

The study showed that 61.1% of the students that suffered school absenteeism were biological children to the head of the household. This is a contradiction to the research curried done by Konate, Gueye and Nseka (2003) which revealed that the relationship to the household head has an impact o the pupils' absenteeism in a way that students of household are usually favored over others in the household (i.e. those fostered, entrusted to the family and those living in it with parents other than the heads of the household).

The study further found out that the association between relationship of the student to the household head and student absenteeism was not significant (p= 0.907), hence there is no significant effect of relationship of student to the household head on student absenteeism.

Table 4.20 Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Survivorship status of the parent

	Survivorship Status of Parent					
	Double Orphan	Single Orphan	Not orphan	**P>|t|**	**R-squared**	**Adj R-squared**
Absenteeism	28 (7%)	77 (19.3%)	91 (22.8%)	0.000	0.0532	0.0508

4.3.7: Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Survivorship status of the parent

The table above shows that 22.8% of students the suffered absenteeism had both the biological children, 19.3% of the students who suffered student absenteeism were single orphans and 7% where double orphans. The study further found out that the association between Survivorship status of the parent and student absenteeism was highly significant (p= 0.000), hence there is high significant effect of Survivorship status of the parent to the household head on student absenteeism. This findings are similar to the findings of Bennell, Hyde & Swainson, 2002; Ainsworth, Beegle & Koda, 2005) which found out that orphan hood often exacerbates financial constraints for poorer households and increases the demand for child labor and absenteeism. Presence of a pupil's parents alive has an impact on his/her absenteeism, particularly in poorer communities. Double

orphans less likely to attend school full-time in combination with work than non-orphans. Being a single orphan reduced the probability of attending school full-time by 5% percentage points.

Table 4.21 Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by distance of the Students Residence

	Distance of the Students Residence				
	Less than 2km	More than 2km	**P>|t|**	**R-squared**	**Adj R-squared**
Absenteeism	30 (7.6%)	168 (42.3%)	0.000	0.1263	0.1241

4.3.8: Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by distance of the students residence

In this study efforts were made to determine the association between distance of the student's residence and absenteeism among lower secondary students. The study found out that students whose residence is more than 2km from their school are more likely to be absent from school. According to the study 42.3% of the students whose suffered absenteeism stay more than 2km from their school, this is because of the long distance walking to school which discourages many students and lose interest in schooling. The study further found out that the association between distance of the student's residence from secondary school and student absenteeism was highly significant (p= 0.000). Despite the increased number of secondary schools both government and private

implementing USE programme long distance to school is still a challenge to students accounting to 42.3% of students' absenteeism.

Table 4.22 Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Household size

	Household Size				
	7members & below	more than 7 members	**P>|t|**	**R-squared**	**Adj R-squared**
Absenteeism	94 (23.5%)	99 (24.8)	0.220	0.0038	0.0013

4.3.9: Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Household size

The table above shows no significant difference in the percentage of students who suffer school absenteeism among those with household with 7 members and below and those from household with more than 7 members (P= 0.220). The study shows that there is no significant effect of Household size on student's absenteeism. This research is in agreement with Colcough et al., (2000), whose research showed that with more children in the household, jobs can be spread between them and siblings more likely to attend, Research in Pakistan indicates that while an increase in family size reduces a girl child's household work, the presence of young children appears to increase their workload (Hakzira & Bedi, 2003). However, these findings contradict with other studies that suggest that the number of siblings under 5 years of age has a strongly negative impact on older girls' schooling and leads to absenteeism.

Table 4.23 Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by Highest education level attained by household head

Highest education level attained by household	**Absenteeism** Number and Percentage Absent	**P>|t|**	**R-squared**	**Adj R-squared**
No education	24 (6%)			
Primary level	81 (20.3%)			
Secondary Level	59 (14.8%)			
Certificate/diploma	17 (4.3%)			
Degree	7 (1.8%)	0.000	0.1415	0.1393

4.3.10: Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by highest education level attained by household head

The study confirms the findings done by previous researcher's e.g. (Juneja, 2001; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003), indicated that no-educated parents cannot support or often do not appreciate the benefits of schooling. The study also found out that literate household heads is not only likely than illiterate ones to enroll their children in secondary schools, but also to ensure that the school attendance of their children is regular. The study further found out that the association between highest education levels attained by household head and student absenteeism was highly significant (p= 0.000). To the illiterate parents

education is perceived to be of limited worth when after completion of school (Secondary), there is no substantial difference between someone who has been to school and one who hasn't been to school.

Table 4.24 Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by the household economic status

Household economic status	**Absenteeism** Number and Percentage Absent	**P>|t|**	**R-squared**	**Adj R-squared**
poorest family	30 (7.6%)			
poorer family	97 (24.4%)			
middle class family	55 (13.9%)			
richer family	11 (2.8%)			
richest family	4 (1%)	0.000	0.0612	0.0589

4.3.11: Cross tabulation of Absenteeism by the household economic status.

Household economic status was referred to as how rich or poor the student's household was. The study also found out that the majority of the students that suffer school absenteeism are from poorer households (24.4%), and his comprises of household that have Mud or unburnt brick and radio. 1.9% are from middle class comprises of households that have Brick walls, iron sheet roof, radio ad cell phone. 32.5% are from poorer family and his comprises of household that have Mud or unburnt brick and radio. 7.6 are from poorest families, and poorest families comprise of grass roof and radio. 2.8%

are from richer families comprising of brick walls, iron sheet roof, electricity, TV, cell phone and 1% are from richest families comprising of brick walls, iron sheet roof, Refrigerator, Electricity, TV, radio and Cell phone. It is therefore indicated from the T-Test statistics that the relationship between household economic status and absenteeism among lower secondary students was highly significant (p=0.000). Ownership of a radio and television leads access to efficient communication this can help pupils to see and listen to highly qualified people like doctors and be inspired to study to be like them, electricity in a house hold is a sign of good economic status. Availability of brick walls is a sign of safety in the home and well-off.

4.4 Multivariate Analysis

A Multiple linear regression model was fitted to examine the relationship between the absenteeism among primary school pupils and the independent variables. This was done to confirm the results on the bivariate analysis. Household work/child labor (HW), Highest Education level of attained by household head (HE), Gender of the student (GS), Age of the household head (AH), Sickness/chronic (S), Survivorship status of the parents of the student (SS), Household economic status (HE) and distance of place of residence from school (DT).

Table 4.25 Multiple linear regression model of Absenteeism to the independent variables (Absenteeism) = HW, GS, HE, AH, S, SS, HE, DT

Source	SS	df	MS
Model	13.9975585	8	1.74969481
Residual	44.6789121	229	.19510442
Total	58.6764706	237	.247580045

Number of obs = 238
F(8, 229) = 8.97
Prob > F = 0.0000
R-squared = 0.2386
Adj R-squared = 0.2120
Root MSE = .44171

Independent Variables	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Household work/Child labor	-0.12178	0.062179	-1.96	0.051	-0.2443	0.000733
Education level attained by household head	-0.10478	0.023478	-4.46	**0.000**	-0.15104	-0.05852
Sex of the respondent	-0.04069	0.058003	-0.7	0.484	-0.15498	0.073596
Age of the household	0.003557	0.041397	0.09	0.932	-0.07801	0.085125
Sickness/illness	-0.14238	0.087536	-1.63	0.105	-0.31486	0.030097
Survivorship status of the parent	0.008735	0.044367	0.2	0.844	-0.07868	0.096154
Household economic status	-0.04038	0.02951	-1.37	0.173	-0.09852	0.017768
Distance of the student's residence	0.189327	0.070873	2.67	**0.008**	0.04968	0.328973
_cons	2.039585	0.263882	7.73	0.000	1.519637	2.559532

Table 4.25 shows that the regression model as a whole is highly significant of the dependent variable. (Prob > F = 0.0000). Hence the model is significant.

Distance of the student's residence from school

The results in Table 4.22 confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the residence from school and absenteeism of the student (Prob>t = 0.008) Students whose residence is more than 2km from their school are more likely to be absent from school compared to their counter parts who reside in a range of less than 2km.

Despite the increased number of secondary schools both government and private implementing

USE programme long distance to school is still a challenge to students accounting to 42.3% of students' absenteeism. The study also discovered that some students still cover eight (8) km daily on foot to reach their schools. This challenge generated mixed results from the schools and the local leaders and teachers interviewed. Some teachers and local leaders were of the view that; "… Students move very long distance to school, which makes them tired. It takes long for them to settle in class and they may not concentrate on school attendance.

Contributing to the same debate, one of the teachers emphasised that; "Although my child has no problem with the distance to the school because we live close to the school, distance to school is a big issue as far as school attendance is concerned for those who come from far. Students reach school tired and the concentration is low. When it rains the problem gets much worse. Some students may not be able to go to school because they can't withstand rain. Girls specifically get disturbed regularly by idle men." This situation

was also revealed by Komakech, R.A. & Ossu, J.R. (2014) in their findings. The authors stated long distance to school contributed to 7.6% of student's absenteeism from school and that some learners covered up to ten (10) km walking to school. This made them too tired to concentrate in class. They equally learnt few subjects each day because they most of the times reached school late which made them perform poorly at school.

Highest education level attained by household head

The results in Table 4.22 confirmed that there is a significant relationship between highest education level attained by household head and absenteeism of the student. (Prob>t = 0.000)

Students from literate households are less likely to miss school because literate household heads fell it is more profitable to educate their children and look at sending their children to school as a wise investment for the future unlike illiterate ones. The research also discovered that literate households will do whatever is required for the child not to miss school like providing scholastic materials, paying fees in time. The household head is a role model to the rest of the household members (Hunter & May, 2003); heads that are educated are likely to inspire schooling children to attain high qualification like theirs and one way to achieve this is regular attendance of school. Therefore, pupils from households headed by uneducated heads lack education role models and more likely to be absent from school than those from households of educated heads.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the research findings about social factors, economic factors, demographic factors and absenteeism among Lower Secondary school students in Uganda, the conclusion and also recommendations that could be used by policy makers to restructure Universal Secondary Education and the education system in general to suit the current social, economic and Demographic situation in Uganda.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The overall purpose of the study was to access the major causes of students' absenteeism in among Ordinary Level Secondary School Students in Uganda. In order to accomplish this, the researcher analyzed the social, economic and demographic factors assumed to be the causes of absenteeism among the Ordinary Level Secondary School Students. The analysis was done at three levels, namely: univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis.

The research found out that 42.7% of the students missed more than 10 times of the school days compared to 57.3 who missed less than 10 times. The researcher in the analysis only took students who had missed school more than 10 times ever since the academic year stated. The researcher defined Absenteeism as missing 8% percent or

more of school days; in practical terms this translates into 10 days a year. The research found out that majority of the students missed school because of sickness and chronic illness. The common sickness noted was malaria followed by fever. Majority of the students interviewed come from household where the head of the house hold is male and between the ages of 30-49 years. The research further found out that majority of the students interviewed were either sons or daughters to the household head, majority of the students reside more than 2km from the Secondary school. Majority of the students come from the households with below 7 members and most students have secondary level as the highest level of education attained by their household head. Majority of the students interviewed were from middle class family where middle class comprises of households that have Brick walls, iron sheet roof, radio ad cell phone.

From the bivariate analysis, the study found out that the following variables have a significant association with absenteeism of the students in Ordinary level secondary education: gender of the student, Household work, Sickness/chronic illness, Age of household head, Survivorship status of the parent, distance of the student's residence, highest education level attained by household head, household economic status. These variables had p-values less than 0.05 and were taken for multivariate analysis.

A Multiple linear regression model was fitted to examine the relationship between the absenteeism among primary school pupils and the independent variables. The regression model as a whole was found to be highly significant of the dependent variable.

The study confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the student's residence from school and absenteeism of the student. Students whose residence is more than 2km from their school are more likely to be absent from school compared to their counter parts who reside in a range of less than 2km. The multivariate analysis confirmed that there is a significant relationship between highest education level attained by household head and absenteeism of the student. The household head is a role model to the rest of the household members (Hunter & May, 2003); heads that are educated are likely to inspire schooling children to attain high qualification like theirs and one way to achieve this is regular attendance of school

5.3 Conclusion

Students' absenteeism is real in Ordinary Level secondary schools and its causes should not be looked at lightly; early intervention in regards to attendance will make a difference for those students who are moving towards disengagement from school and as a result, they begin practicing social evils in the society. Therefore, it is very important for the government, policy makers, school administrators, media, parents, and the general public to accurately monitor, identify early and intervene about this silent killer. Absenteeism has long term effects to the student(s) and the nation, that is: leads to school dropout hence a blockage of students' academic growth; poor performance in examinations due to low syllabi coverage; a waste of tax payers money; leads to increase in crimes because of being attracted to the outside environment full of bad elements practicing activities such as; drug abuse, gambling (playing cards, sports betting, pick pocketing), commercial sex, fornication leading to early marriages and HIV/AIDS risks which is a result of perceiving

being at school as academic punishment. In addition, they become a burden to the society because of unemployment since one has no employable skills and it will also spoil the reputation of the school because of failure rate which makes students to transfer to another school with better academic performance. The empirical study also shows that; 42.7% of the students missed more than 10 times of the school days. The mainly affected categories include; children from poor families, children living far from school, female students, orphans, disabled, male students, and children living with one parent which could be a result of divorce or separation or death as thought by the respondents during the study.

5.4 Recommendations

Attendance is a key driver of the school performance, high school graduation, and college attainment. Thus, as a nation we must act, to ensure that our students are ready, willing and able to attend school every day. Their future, and hence our future, depends on it. It is against this background that the researcher offers the following practical and policy recommendations for the improvement of students' absenteeism in secondary schools.

The government through the Ministry of Education and Sports should make sure that parents understand their responsibility of contributing towards the development of the school and their children through paying required development fees which is always agreed by themselves in the Parent and Teachers' Association (PTA) meeting.

Furthermore, since the majority of parents are still pinched with the costs of scholastics and the Parents and Teachers Association's contributions, the researcher recommends the government to subsidize taxes on the scholastics materials such as books, pens,

calculators, and school uniforms or provide them free by consolidating it in the grant since the majority of the parents are peasants who cannot even afford two meals a day and giving money for books, pens, calculators, mathematical sets is like wasting money and yet there are other pressing needs like food, medical, and weeding the gardens. Thus, this initiative will enhance the enrolment while at the same time increasing on retention of students in school since parents will be left with a mandatory task of providing meals. To students who are bread-winners in the family, the researcher recommends that; the government, community, CSOs, development agencies and well to do individuals should provide assistance to such students in form of food, clothing, books and required to enable them achieve their dreams.

The most workable approach of addressing the problem of long distance would be introduction of Open Schooling System in Uganda. The system refers to "the physical separation of the school level learner from the teacher, and the use of unconventional teaching methodologies, and information and communications technologies to bridge the separation and provide the education and training." The system has already been practiced in countries with access problems like South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana among other African countries. The system is found to be more economical because it cuts the cost of recruiting too many teachers, supervision, constructions drastically; provide opportunities to the school leavers, dropouts, working adults, housewives, and learners from distance and remote areas; and reach out to those who could not complete/continue their schooling due to socio-cultural and economic reasons.

The research also recommends that; schools be held accountable for improving attendance. For instance, attendance and chronic absence rates should be publicly availed and reported to the District Education Officer. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Sports should work with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), district education stakeholders and state agencies like the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), District Internal Security Officers (DISOs), and Gombolola Internal Security Officers (GISOs) to collect weekly student level attendance data. This will help to reduce on the "ghost" students, schools and teachers due to routine monitoring hence saving the tax payers money.

The researcher also recommends the MoES, District officials (District Education Officer and the team; District Health Team), and school administrators to create school environment friendly to the sick such as; students with HIV/AIDS, asthma, sickle cell, epilepsy, flu, and girls in their menstrual period by showing concern and abundant love instead of discriminating. For instance, the health team should provide information to students about asthma, its effect on student attendance, and provide strategies to help student(s) learn to better manage the disease (asthma); reducing the transmission of common illnesses like flu and cough through provision of hand washing facilities like water tape, tape jerrican and improving the quality of school; the government should extent the services of SNV of skilling pupils in making sanitary pads to curb female pupils' absenteeism from school during menstrual periods to secondary schools since many adolescent girls are in secondary; the target should be in rural areas in the country; above all the government should scrapped off taxes on materials like refined cotton,

towels and already made pads to increase access to the sanitary towels by rural girls/women. Finally, physical check-up must be carried out as many times in a year as possible for students and staff.

5.5 Areas Recommended for Further Research

The following are the areas the researcher has seen prudent for the future research:

- Teacher qualification and students' academic performance; and Effects of Students' Absenteeism on Students' Academic/School Performance. During my research I have not seen any research on the effects of absenteeism on students' academic and yet this is a very important area of study.

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APPENDICES

SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE

	INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT/RESPONDENTS Please help us by filling in this questionnaire. Your responses are very important to us. Do not write your name on this questionnaire. All the information you give us will be kept private and for academic purpose only. Nobody will know who filled in this questionnaire. Your teachers, neighbours, family and schoolmates will not see your answers. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. PLEASE BE HONEST IN YOUR ANSWERS. Completing this questionnaire is completely voluntary. If filling in the questionnaire makes you feel uncomfortable, you can stop at any time. If you find a question too difficult or too personal, you can fill in the box 'I don't want to talk about this'.

	Give your consent for participation in the study by answering the following question: I complete this questionnaire on a voluntary basis, and I understand that I can stop at any time: (*Please tick only one box*) Yes ❒1 No ❒2 THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!	
#	Question	Response
	Section 1: Demographic information	
1	Date of Interview	Day _____ Month____ Year _____
2	School Name	
3	Sex of respondent/student	1 – Male 2 – Female
	Thank you for agreeing to take this survey. Now I am going to ask you some questions about yourself and you're your attendance at school	

4	How old are you?	Age: _____ years
5	What Class are you in?	Class:_____
	Section 2: Attendance and illness	
6	Have you ever missed school?	1 - Yes 2 – No,
7	Ever since this academic year stated, how many times have you missed school.	1 – less than 10 times 2 – More than 10 times
8	The last time you missed school, what was the reason? ***Please mark all that apply to you.*** a) I was sick 1- **Yes**_____ 2- **No**_____ b) I stayed home to take care of siblings/do household chores 1 – **Yes**_____ 2 – **No**_____ c) - I worked (field/market...) 1- **Yes**_____ 2- **No**_____ d) - I went elsewhere (visited someone, went on a trip) 1- **Yes**_____ 2-	

	No_____ e) - I didn't want to go to school 1-**Yes**_____ 2- **No**_____ f) – Don't know / no response 1- **Yes**_____ 2- **No**_____ g) - Other _____	
9	The last time you were sick, what sickness did you have? ***Multiple answers are possible. Please mark all that are mentioned.***	1 - Diarrhea 2 - Malaria 3 - Fever 4 - Headache 5 – Wound 6 – Cough 7 – Flu or Cold 8 - Don't know 9 - Other (specify)_____
10	The last time you were sick, did you miss school?	1 - Yes 2 - No 3 – missed only some class

		4- Don't know
11	Have you ever missed school because you hard to stayed home to take care of siblings/do household chores or house work eg, farming, looking after animals, washing clothes, plates and caps.	1 - Yes 2 - No 3 – missed only some class 4 - Don't know
	Household/Family/Home	
12	Where is your home located?	1 – Urban/Town area 2 – Rural/Village area
13	How far is your school from your home?	1 – Less than 2km 2 – More than 2km
14	Sex of the household head or family head?	1 – Male 2 – Female
15	What is your Relationship to the Household head/family head?	1 – Son/daughter 2 – grand child 3 – brother/sister 4 – niece/nephew 5 – adopted/foster/step child

		6 – Other relative (Specify)……..
16	How many are you in your family/at home?	1 – 7 members and below 2 – More than 7 members 3 – don't Know 4 - Others (specify)_____
17	*What is the* Highest Education level attained by the head household or head of the family?	1 – No education/didn't go to school 2 – Primary level 3 – Secondary level 4 – Certificate/diploma 5 – Degree 6 - don't Know
18	What is the Age of the house hold head or family Head?	1 – Less than 30 years 2 – 30 - 49 years 3 – More than 49 years 4 - Don't know 5 - Other (specify)_____
19	Which of the following is true for you?	1 – Double orphan

		2 – Single orphan 3 – Not orphan 4 - Don't know 5 - Other (specify)_____
20	Which of the following statements apply to you?	1 – Am from a poorest family 2 – Am from a poorer family 3 – Am from a Middle class family 4 – Am from a richer family 5 – Am from a richest family 6 - Don't know 7 - Other (Specify)_____
21	Does your home have: a) Brick walls and iron sheet roof ------No (2) --------Yes (1) b) Mud or Un burnt bricks ----------No (2) ----------yes (1) c) Refrigerator ----------No (2)----------Yes (1) d) Grass roof ----------No (2) ----------Yes (1) e) Electricity ----------No (2) ----------Yes (1) f) Radio ----------No (2) ----------Yes (1) g) TV ----------No (2) ----------Yes (1) h) Cell Phone ----------No (2) ----------Yes (1)	