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Situational Factors and Quality of Girl Child Education in Uganda: Evidence from Ibanda District

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Abstract: The battle against human underdevelopment characterised by diseases, poverty and ignorance can be won through education. Access to better quality education for all humans is important for the acquisition of healthy and poverty-free lives. This underscores the importance of quality education for all in the alleviation of poverty and underdevelopment in the world. The above notwithstanding, girls in Uganda continue to face substantial barriers to getting a quality education and particularly; secondary education. This can be explained basing on situational factors at school and in homes of girl children. For example, studies have shown that families living in poverty usually cannot afford sending all children to school and, when forced to choose, they send their sons. Additionally, traditional divisions of labor often puts girls at a disadvantage regarding education, since assignments given to girls in agriculture, cooking, and caring for young siblings and the sick often interfere with schooling and their chances of attaining quality education. Because of such reasons, many Ugandan girls are prone to receiving poor quality secondary education. Using a mixed methods approach, the study investigated the influence of situational factors on the quality of girl child secondary education in Ibanda District; Uganda. Specifically; the study: 1) assessed the influence of family background on the quality of girl child secondary education; 2) examined the relationship between school environment and the quality of girl child secondary education and; 3) established the influence of teacher quality on the quality of girl child secondary education. It was reported that family background influences the quality of girl child education. Also, a better school environment was found to improve the quality of girl child secondary education while teacher quality in terms of qualification and experience didn't significantly influence the quality of girl child secondary education.

Key words: situational factors, quality, secondary education, girl child

1. Introduction

There can never be sustainable world development when only male children receive better quality education irrespective of the level of such education. It has previously been proven that educated girls marry at an appropriate age, live healthy and productive lives (Wodon, Male, Nayihouba, Onagoruwa & Savadogo et al; 2017); earn higher incomes and are able to make sound personal choices (Parsons, Edmeades, Kes, Petroni & Sexton, et al., 2015) and certainly constructively influence the quality of the future for themselves and their families. Such underscores the importance of high quality girl child education at all levels. Quality girl child education

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strengthens economies and reduces inequality (Hodge, 2017); it contributes to stable and sustainable societies and allows all humans to realise their full potentials. It is therefore a concern all development partners and national systems that girls receive high quality education.

Girls continue to be exposed to poor quality education with over half of the girls aged between 15 to 24 years in the world being illiterate (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2017). Also, only one out of five girls in the world has attended high school (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2018). This implies many of the girls have received poor quality secondary education if any. Another factor that threatens the quality of girl child secondary education is the high dropout rate. According to the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and UNESCO studies on Uganda for example, more girls than boys quit secondary schooling. It is for such causes that only 27.58% of secondary school going girls completed school compared to 31.13% of boys in 2013 (Okudi, 2016).

According to Thindwa (2015), for quality education to be provided, learning environments must be supportive and the content relevant; the teaching must be student-centered and the learning outcomes should perceived as being good from the student point of view. Thus, quality secondary education relates to the educational output that meets demands of learners, teachers, parents, the community, and employers attained in post primary education centers (Masundire & Lumadi, 2019). Quality education considers relevance, equity of access and outcome, and students rights of an educational experience (UNESCO, 2004). This paper however examines quality of secondary education with reference to scores and grades of students, completion rate and progression to the next level.

For the years 2017–2019, male children outperformed their female counterparts in Uganda Certificate of Education examinations (Kawalya, 2018; Nabadda, 2019; Waswa, 2020). Also, in the 2019 UCE examinations, females performed poorly in all the large entry subjects with more marked differences in Mathematics and the Sciences (Kawalya, 2018). The level of performance of females in sciences, especially physics and chemistry is low with nearly 60% being unable to get a pass 8 (Kizza, 2020). This is an indicator of poor quality girl child secondary education in Uganda. There is thus a need to critically examine the quality of girl child secondary education with an intention of improving such a quality.

The national context depicted above blurs the exact picture in some districts. In the case of Ibanda District, the quality of girl child secondary education has not been the best for long. For the years 2006–2013, the total number of girls in Division I and Division II for UCE examinations has always been less than 15% for each of these years (Eiraka, 2018). Only a few of the girls (about 25%) appear in Division III. Divisions IV and IX are the common grades attained by majority of girls (60%) in UCE. Thus, there is poor quality girl child secondary education in Ibanda District as shown by their poor grades.

While several factors influence the quality of girl child secondary education, situational factors play a major role. Situational factors were conceptualized in terms of family background, school environment and teacher quality. These factors were perceived to influence quality of girl child secondary education (in terms of academic performance, completion rates and admission into further education). Therefore, this paper diagnoses situational factors in relation to the poor quality of girl child education in Ibanda District. This is because provision of high quality girl child secondary education is desirable since secondary education is a prerequisite for admission to higher education and a determinant of career choice (Gore, Holmes, Smith, Fray & McElduff, 2017). It is an investment and an instrument for the achievement of rapid economic, social, political, technological and scientific development (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2014).

As already indicated, there has been poor girl child performance rate over the years in Ibanda District. For a number of years, stakeholders in Ibanda District have expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of girl child secondary education as shown by their poor performance in national examinations (Ibanda District Education Office, 2013). For several years, when UCE and UACE are released, stakeholders complain about the poor performance of girls. The Member of Parliament Ibanda North for example was quoted in 2018 lamenting about the poor performance of Kibubura girls S.S in UCE examination (Karenzi, 2018). Terminal examination reports also do not reflect good performance from girl children with many of the girls dropping out besides failing to enroll in higher education institutions. These are all indicators of poor performance.

Specifically; the study: 1) assessed the influence of family background on the quality of girl child secondary education; 2) examined the relationship between school environment and the quality of girl child secondary education and; 3) established the influence of teacher quality on the quality of girl child secondary education; all in Ibanda District. Little attention has been devoted to the quality of girls' education (Jones, 2011) and more so in line with situational factors as it was done in this study hence the need for this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Situational Factors

Rauthmann (2015) broadly defined situational factors as the situation cues (objective physical stimuli in an environment), psychological situation characteristics (subjective meanings and interpretations of situations), and situation classes (types or groups of entire situations with similar cues or similar levels or profiles of characteristics). This definition is however generic such that the paper adopted a more specific definition by Rauthmann (2017) where situational factors are defined as the broad dimensions of situation characteristics used to describe and compare any situation. In this paper, situational factors refer to family background, school environment and teacher quality as detailed below.

2.1.1 Family Background and Quality of Girl Child Education

The influence of family background on quality of girl child secondary education is explained using the Human Capital Theory (HCT). According to HCT, education is a human capital investment guided by the "cost-benefit" principle which asserts that educational achievements of learners depend on the resources invested by households towards education of children (Almendarez, 2011). Thus, improper educational investment by households is one of the causes of poor quality of girl child secondary education.

In Uganda, secondary education has been free in Universal Secondary Education Schools (USE) since 2007. In none USE schools (both government and private), students' households or other sponsors meet the associated educational costs. However, whether in a USE or a non-USE school, households meet other costs (other than tuition) associated with schooling their children. Such costs are associated with registration and admission, purchase of uniforms and scholastic materials, examination, parent teachers association (PTA) subscription fees, boarding fees, meals and provision of other daily monetary demands, transportation costs to and from school and so much more (Mastercard, 2018). Poor households have insufficient resources that may be committed towards attainment of high quality education of the girl child. This is exacerbated by the fact that some households in Uganda hold education of the girl child on low priority.

Additionally, girl children from poor households experience irregular school attendance and at times drop out before completing their secondary education cycle. This is caused by the household failure to meet the costs

associated with education. Another important factor is that family background affects learning behaviors (Abah, Age, Agada, 2019) and influences the quality of education attained. Thus, like Glewwe & Chang (2010) suggested, there is a link between household factors and when children start school, how often they attend, whether they have to temporarily withdraw and also when and if they drop out.

Research studies (Buckingham, Wheldall & Beaman-Wheldall, 2013; Bergen, Zuijen, Bishop & Jong, 2016) have indicated that children from poor households develop academic skills at a slow rate compared to those from rich ones. Such is explained by the Cultural Capital Theory (CCT) which holds that family cultural resources and environments determine children's educational aspirations and performances (Li & Qiu, 2018). Compared to families with insufficient cultural capital, parents with rich cultural capital are more aware of the rules of schools, invest more cultural resources, pay more attention to cultivate the children's educational aspiration and interest, help children with school curriculum, and enable them to perform in academics outstandingly (Claussen & Osborne, 2013). Such signify the high quality of girl child education that students from rich families are likely to receive compared to those from poor families.

There also claims that children from poor households experience poor cognitive and language skills, experience memory loss and have inadequate socio-emotional processing abilities (Tavernise, 2012). Thus, like MacPherson and Osborne (2012) claimed, students' cognitive skills are positively related to their parents' socioeconomic status. Patrick (2012) asserted that in terms of material or environmental circumstances, high class parents provide their children with more opportunities to learn and have more appropriate knowledge about academic needs of their children. This shows that children having a good family background are at a vantage position learn because they have prior and continuous experience provided by the privileged families.

The influence of family background on the child's education can also be explained by the extent of parental involvement in the child's education. According to Li and Qui (2018), parental educational participation, such as discussing school things with children, checking their homework, and participating in school activities improves children's academic performances and hence the quality of education received. As if qualifying the preceding, Zhao and Hong (2012) showed that parents' educational expectations have significant effects on junior students' academic performances. Parents with higher social economic status usually participate in their children's learning activities more intensively, pay more attention to communication with teachers, manage the children's school absence and other risky behaviors, and improve the children' academic performance (Wu, 2013a) and this is an important determinant of the quality of education for any learner. It is thus a basic argument in this paper, that the quality of secondary education received by girl children in Ibanda District is a function of family background in terms of parental involvement.

Other studies have also indicated that children from households of low-SES are less likely to have experiences that encourage the development of fundamental skills of reading acquisition, such as phonological awareness, vocabulary, and oral language (Buckingham, Wheldall & Beaman-Wheldall, 2013). This is explained by the fact that children's initial reading competency is correlated with the home literacy environment, number of books owned, and parent distress (Bergen, Zuijen, Bishop & Jong, 2016). However, poor households have less access to learning materials and experiences, including books, computers, stimulating toys, skill-building lessons, or tutors to create a positive literacy environment (Houle, 2014). While these are acceptable findings, they may not always hold in all situations. Contextual issues may have hidden effects on the study variables. This paper provides insight basing on evidence from Ibanda District.

2.1.2 School Environment and Quality of Girl Child Secondary Education

School environment refers to the available facilities in school that facilitate students' learning outcomes (Mfreke, 2016). Components of the school environment includes school buildings, classroom, accommodation, libraries, laboratories, furniture, recreational equipment, apparatus and other instructional materials. Until recently, most of the literature on meeting the needs of girls in schools focused on access and retention but not on the quality of school environment. For example the most recent literature on gender and education presents few examples of gender-sensitive school environment (Levtov, 2014).

Appropriate education facilities and learning environments are fundamental for improved quality of education, particularly in socio economically disadvantaged schools (Zapata-Roche, 2017). This is because learning occurs when learners interact with the environment (Torkar, 2014). According to Mbonteh, Fonkeng, Galy (2016), absence or poor (and or deteriorating) quality of educational facilities affects quality of education. Thus, school environments should be evaluated improvement of the quality of girl child education. The existing inequalities could certainly be a result of gaps in the secondary school environments. It is therefore a high time that secondary schools made steps to improve school environments. Establishment of a safe, girl-friendly school environment is essential for the attraction of girls to school and keeping them there (RTI International, 2013). Infra-structural issues such as the provision of separate toilets for girls are an important intervention for improving the quality of girl child education (Okudi, 2016). This also involves promotion of gender awareness amongst staff and boys in schools, introduction of curricula and learning materials that are gender-sensitive and meeting needs of girls as much as those of boys (Nabuye, 2018). Such a mindset is lacking among many in the least developed countries and particularly in Ibanda District.

Studies from West Africa have shown that improved infrastructure (particularly water and sanitation) contributes to increased exam pass rates for girls (Kazianga, Levy, Linden & Sloan; 2013; Dumitrescu, Levy, Orfield & Sloan, 2011). Conversely, a study in Bihar, India reported that the quality of school infrastructure does not significantly influence learning outcomes (Santhya, Zavier & Jejeebhoy, 2015). The influence of better school environment for menstrual hygiene management, such as toilets for girls or running water has not been investigated. However, some studies reviewed by Hennegan and Montgomery (2016) reported positive effects of menstrual health management initiatives on girls' attendance, which is a prerequisite for improved learning outcomes and high quality education.

The above show that school environments influence quality of education (Marcus and Page, 2016). Additionally, classroom environment plays an important role in outcomes and thus influence the quality of education. For example a study by Chetty and Friedman (2011) reported that students, who were randomly assigned to higher quality classroom in grades K-3 earned more, were more likely to attend college, saved more for retirement, and lived in better neighborhoods. This suggests that a good school environment is important for the formulation of thought processes and experiences and thus influences the quality of education.

Another important aspect of the school environment is whether the school is boarding or not. According to Willemsen (2016), Boarding schools reduce girls' work burden and allow them to study more which improves the quality of their education. Additionally, a boarding school helps girls to form stronger relationships with their teachers and allows them to build self-confidence and commitment to study (Shah, 2011). Boarding schools can also help relieve parents' concerns about long journeys to school, fatigue and vulnerability to violence en route, particularly for girl children. Like it was found out by the Moroccan National Government Programme, provision of dormitories and scholarships enables girls to attend secondary school education and contributes to a 20%

improvement in national end-of-year test scores (Muskin, Kamime & Adlaoui, 2011).

In Ibanda, many schools are co-educational (mixed); there is a need to evaluate the influence of co-education on the quality of education of a girl child. There is mixed evidence on whether single-sex or co-educational schools offer more conducive learning environments for girls. Past studies that compared girls' exam results in specific subjects for both mixed and single sex schools claimed that there are positive impacts on learning outcomes for girls in single-sex schools than those in mixed schools. However, Unterhalter, North, Arnot, Lloyd, Moletsane et al. (2014) suggests that such studies may not be generalisable or comparable since they were typically carried out in elite or other atypical schools, which are often better resourced.

Availability of school mentors and counselors is also an important determinant of the school environment. Some literature suggests that school-based mentors help girls to develop self-confidence and attain positive attitudes towards study (Willemsen, 2016; Shah, 2011). This is supported by the findings from an evaluation of a girls' education project implemented by Camfed International (2016) in Tanzania and Zimbabwe where it was reported that Learner Guides (or mentors) contributed to greater commitment to studying and improved exam results for girls.

2.1.3 Teacher Quality and Girl Child Secondary Education

The quality of education depends on the quality of teachers since teachers are at the frontline while striving to achieve quality education for every student including girls. Thus, as national educational systems strive to improve education quality for girls, teacher quality must also be addressed. This is because there is a relationship between learners, teachers and materials showing that quality education requires well-educated and trained teachers (Jagannathan & Smart, 2018).

Uganda, like any of those countries that are striving to meet the education for all targets tends to have the greatest shortage in teachers (Garcia & Weiss, 2018). This calls for a need to invest not only in increasing the number of teachers but also improving their quality in terms of qualification and personal attributes. Additionally, research shows that having a same-sex teacher has important contributions towards the improvement of girl child education (Marcus & Page, 2016). This increases girls' school attendance, retention and learning, but only in strongly gender-segregated societies. Elsewhere, the evidence is mixed, with some studies stressing that the overall quality of teaching is more important. There is also some evidence that having a female role model in their school has positive impacts on girls' aspirations and self-confidence. This paper clarifies on how teacher quality contributes to the quality of girl child education.

The quality of teachers influences the quality of support provided to learners considering the fact that girls desire educational support that differs from that of boys (Unterhalter et al., 2014). Giving girls the support they need to fulfill their potential allows them to help their families and contribute to national development. Teachers must be able to understand that removing negative language and stereotypes from classrooms and using materials that show girls in non-traditional roles for example is fundamental for quality girl child education (Marcus and Page, 2016). This is only possible if a school has competent teachers. Competent teachers are able to follow up with children who stop coming to school and ask parents to ensure daily attendance; similarly rather than stigmatizing or punishing girls who become pregnant, competent teachers welcome them back to school (Shah, 2011). This is important for improving the quality of girl child education.

Some studies have emphasized that enhancing the quality of teaching through teacher training is critical for improving learning outcomes for girls and boys alike, although there is limited data disaggregated by sex (Seeberg, 2011). Some studies suggest that where girls lag behind boys, they benefit disproportionately from improved

teaching methods. For example, Piper and Korda's (2011) study of a programme in Liberia, which trained teachers in how to teach students to read, found that girls' reading levels increased by 1.43 standard deviations compared to 1.21 for boys. There is some evidence that girls' learning outcomes improve where teachers hold higher-level qualifications (Unterhalter et al., 2013).

While recognizing the preceding, the Director of Education in Uganda was quoted expressing concerns not only about the shortage of teachers in the country but also their poor quality especially in the science subjects (Ahimbisibwe, 2014). This indicates a shortage of teachers both in terms of quality and numbers which certainly explains the poor quality of girl child education. It is important therefore that all stakeholders commit the required resources to improve the quality of girl child education.

Quality teaching requires that teachers encourage active learning and encourage students to engage with, rather than memorize learning materials. This is an avenue which stake holders in secondary schools need to address with a purpose of improving the quality of girl child secondary education. Active learning improves learning outcomes for students (Westbrook et al., 2013). Kazianga et al. (2013) posits that girls in schools that encourage active learning outperform both girls in multi-grade schools without active learning. The substantial improvement in girls' performance may reflect a growth in self-confidence, which enabled them to participate more fully in class.

Gender-responsive pedagogy (teaching that redresses gender inequalities through efforts to engage girls and boys equally and to combat gender stereotypes) is equally an important aspect that can be considered with an aim of improving quality of girl child education. Teacher training in gender-responsiveness improves test scores for girls (Shah, 2011) and also leads to more equal gender relations within schools (Mascarenhas, 2012). Thus, good teachers and good teaching are essential ingredients for improving education quality for girls and boys. Students of good teachers have learning gains equivalent to one school year and students of weak teachers master less than half the expected content (King and Winthrop, 2015).

Teacher shortages are severe all over the world; UNESCO (2014) estimates that 5.1 million more teachers are needed to achieve universal lower secondary education by 2030. Half of these teachers are needed in Sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, Ibanda District experiences a teacher deficit of 20% (Uganda Ministry of Education, 2014). This shows that children in low-income schools are less likely to have well-qualified teachers (Long, 2011) yet a teacher's years of experience and quality of training are correlated with children's academic achievement (Blömeke, Olsen & Suhl, 2016).

2.2 Quality of Girl Child Education

In September 2000, 188 heads of state from around the world signed the Millennium Declaration and established the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) whose deadline of achievement was 2015. However, more than 75 countries never met this deadline especially with regard to achieving gender parity in primary and secondary education (United Nations, 2015). With the recognised failure, the goals were replaced with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which also aim at improving the quality of human life and development. Of peculiar interest is provision of quality education. This shows the world's commitment towards provision of quality education especially for girls. Education has a profound effect on girls' and women's ability to claim other rights and achieve status in society, such as economic independence and political representation (Bhat, 2015). Also, having an education makes enormous difference to a woman's chances of finding well-paid work, raising a healthy family and preventing the spread of diseases such as HIV and AIDS (Semuels, 2017). However, in

developing countries, there is limited access of the girl child to quality education and this limits their future earning and brings about barriers to poverty reduction and human development (World Bank, 2020).

Research conducted in Pakistan shows that girls need to stay in school for longer than if they are to realize the full benefits of education (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Difficulties of accessibility, lack of resources and low teacher quality and morale are widespread. In particular the lack of female secondary school teachers in rural areas is a real problem. Despite being compulsory in Uganda, secondary school, which typically encompasses students from 13 to 18 years old, female attendance, is significantly low; 30 % of girls between these ages weren't enrolled in secondary school in 2011. Those who attend drop out at a later time and poverty is one of the reasons why girls drop out of school. Impoverished families often need their daughters to stay at home and help with the housework or other income-generating activities. Some families have to marry off their young daughters to receive a dowry, which prevents them from continuing their education. Of the girls that stop attending school, 40% dropped out because of child marriage (Hostettert, 2018).

As was introduced by the missionaries, formal education in Uganda has always been in favour of boys and men rather than girls and women. For many years, there have been gender disparities in enrolment, dropout, performance and general attainment (Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2017) at all levels of education. The gender disparities in education were facilitated by historical and cultural factors that regarded the male sex being more important than the female. For that matter, more male children than females accessed education (Ssenkaba, 2018) and this has gone a long way in influencing the quality of secondary education received by girls in Uganda.

According to UNESCO (2016), worldwide, 130 million girls between the age of 6 and 17 are out of school. Similarly, Ibanda District Local Government 5 year development plan (2015/2016-2019/2020) shows that girls constitute only 39.2 % of the total number of students enrolled in secondary schools in the district. This shows that the majority of the girls in Uganda never receive quality secondary education. Also, Gena and Swift (2013) reported that there is a considerable dropout rate than boys, at secondary education. At the same time, girls have a lower pass rate than boys at UCE. A report by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, using 2014 Census data found that although there were similar levels of primary school education between boys and girls, there were significant disparities in performance, levels of classroom engagement and access to facilities. In addition, there are still significant gender disparities in enrollment for secondary schools. These are indicators of poor quality secondary education for girls in Uganda.

While lower secondary education in Uganda has been made universal, it should be noted that providing access, to schools and basic education for girls no matter where they live, whether in cities or the remotes hamlets, although essential, is not enough. For girls to grow into flourishing women, much more is needed. Education is far more than instruction. As the Latin word edúcere indicates, it means leading people out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of knowledge, from immaturity to true maturity. It's aimed not just at helping people become smarter but wiser. It involves not just imparting information but formation, assisting the young to seek the truth, come to know it and come to live in accordance with it. Its aim is not just to help them become intelligent adults but genuinely good persons. This represents a need for quality secondary education for the girls in this country.

3. Methodology

Using a mixed methods approach, and correlation design, data were collected using a self-administered

questionnaire and interviews with constructs on personal information, situational factors and quality of girl child education. The instruments adopted for the study were tested for reliability and validity. The reliability of the scale was 0.85 as adapted from Cook and Wall (1980) and the measured validity and reliability of items in each construct in the questionnaire were established using Cronbach alpha. Using the questionnaire and interview guide, data were collected from head teachers, teachers, girl students, parents for some of the 46 secondary schools in Ibanda District (Both government and private). 300 girl child secondary students, 08 head teachers, 100 teachers and 150 parents were selected as respondents for this study. Analysis involved use of frequency counts and means at descriptive level. At inferential level, Fisher's ANOVA and Pearson's linear correlation were used.

4. Findings

4.1 Effect of Family Background on the Quality of Girl Child Secondary Education

The effect of family background on the quality of girl child secondary education was diagnosed basing on availability of resources, culture and parents' level of education. An aggregate index (i.e., famback — an acronym for family background) for all items in relating to family background was computed and Table 1 gives the associated descriptive.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics on Respondents Self Rating of Family Background

Statistic		Value
Mean		2.35
95% confidence interval	Upper	2.45
	Lower	2.24
Median		2.20
Standard deviation		0.77
Range		3.01
Skewness		0.60

Respondents rating of family background was low (2.35) with opinions ranging from 2.24 to 2.45 at the 95% confidence interval. Thus, most girl students were from low background families. They had almost similar views regarding family background for girl children (std. deviation 0.77) with opinions slightly heaped to the left (Skew 0.56) showing that many respondents agreed to a low family background. The family background aggregate index (famback) was correlated with the quality of girl child secondary education aggregate index (eduqual) using Pearson's Linear Correlation index computed as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Pearson's Co-relation Coefficient between Level of Family Background and Quality of Girl Child Secondary Education

		Quality of girl child secondary education	Level of family back ground
Quality of girl child secondary education	Pearson correlation	1	0.333***
	Sig (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	166	116
Level of family back ground	Pearson correlation	0.333***	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	116	116

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

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient for students' family background and quality of girl child secondary education was r = + 0.333, having a significance value (p = 0.000) which is less than 0.01. Thus, there was a high positive correlation between students' family background and quality of girl child secondary education. This implies that the quality of girl child secondary education is positively co- related with family background at the 1% level of significance. These results were supported by responses obtained by interviews with head teachers who reported that students usually lacked enough resources for being at school, and this affected the quality education received by students as shown by their poor grades. It was revealed that households spend school fees, food, clothes, scholastic materials like books and pens and furniture at school among others whose total cost accrue to a high value that may not be affordable for some households hence affecting the education of girl children. Furthermore, regarding the quality of parents, it was reveled that behaviours and beliefs of parents affected educational achievement of their daughters. Girls whose parents were educated were more likely to achieve quality education compared to those from poor families since educated parents supported, encouraged and guided their girl children hence positively influencing the quality of their education.

4.2 Effect of School Environment on the Quality of Girl Child Secondary Education

School environment was conceptualized in terms of facilities, classroom and policies in the school; the facilities or resources used for conducting educational functions, such as chalk, text books, and other instructional materials at school. All the items relating to the school environment were aggregated into an aggregate index (Schoolenv. which is an acronym for school environment) Table 3 gives descriptive statistics there from.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics on Respondents Self Rating of School Environment

Statistic		Value
Mean		2.00
95% confidence interval	Upper	2.51
	Lower	2.31
Median		2.21
Standard deviation		0.45
Range		3.11
Skewness		0.72

According to Table 3 respondents' rating of quality of school environment was poor (2.00) with opinions ranging from 2.31 to 2.51 at the 5% rejection level. Respondents views were related (std. deviation 0.45) though such opinions were slightly heaped to the left (Skew 0.72), i.e., a poor school environment was reported. The school environment aggregate index (schoolenv) was correlated with the quality of girl child secondary education aggregate index (eduqual) using Pearson's Linear Correlation index computed as shown in Table 4.

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient results for school environment and quality of school environment was r = 0.598 with a significance value (p = 0.000) that was less than 0.01. This meant a positive correlation between quality of school environment and quality of girl child secondary education. Thus quality of girl child secondary education increases as the quality of school environment. The above results were in agreement with responses from interviewees who reported that some students lacked enough of the things that contribute to a supportive environment; in most of the selected secondary schools, there were inadequate play grounds for games and sports for girls; classrooms were reportedly not enough and congested. In some schools, washrooms for girl child students were inadequate yet such are essential for healthy lives of girl children at school. This poor school

environment certainly negatively affected learning environment for girls and hence minimized the quality of their education. This explains the poor performance of girl children as revealed by the results analysed quantitatively.

Table 4 Pearson's Co-Relation Coefficient Between Quality of School Environment and Quality of Girl Child Secondary Education

		Quality of girl child secondary education	quality of school environment
Quality of girl child secondary education	Pearson correlation	1	0.598***
	Sig (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	166	116
quality of school environment	Pearson correlation	0.598***	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	116	116

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

4.3 Effect of Teacher Quality on Quality of Girl-Child Secondary Education

Teacher quality was conceptualized in terms of education level of teachers, the level of teacher commitment and level of experience of teachers and each of these was related to quality of girl child education as follows.

4.3.1 Level of Education for Teachers and Quality of Girl Child Education

Teachers were categorized basing on their level of qualification as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Number of Teachers in Relation to Their Qualification

Education level	Frequency(percents)	Cumulative percents
Diploma	24(20.7)	20.7
Bachelor's Degree	80 (69)	87.7
Master's Degree	10 (8.6)	98.3
PhD	02 (1.7)	100
Total	116 (100)	-

From Table 5, most teachers were qualified with the majority (69%) having a degree. Cumulatively, 100% of the teachers were qualified secondary school teachers. Through interviews also, it was revealed that the teachers were registered secondary school teachers. Thus, teachers are prepared and allowed to teach. Such qualifications could be used to better the quality of girl child secondary education. To obtain an overall picture of how quality of girl child secondary education varied with teacher qualifications, ANOVA results were obtained and they are as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6 ANOVA Results Showing Variation of Quality of Girl Child Education with Qualification of Teachers.

Teacher qualifications	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig. (2 tailed)
Diploma	24	3.55	0.92		
Bachelor's Degree	80	3.42	0.86		
Masters Degree	10	1.18	0.75	0.28	0.76
PhD	2	0.91	0.00		
Total	116	2.27	0.82		

From Table 6, the F value was 0.28 with a sig value of 0.76 at a 0.05 rejection level (which is greater than the rejection level $\alpha = 0.05$). This meant that quality of girl child secondary education did not differ significantly

with teachers' qualification at the 5% level of significance.

4.3.2 Teaching Experience and Quality of Girl Child Secondary Education

Teachers' self rating regarding the level of experience is shown in the Table 7.

Table 7 Teacher Categories in Relation to the Number Years Spent in the Teaching Service

Number of years spent in the teaching service	Frequency(percents)	Cumulative percents
Less than five years	32(27.6)	27.6
5-10 years	55(47.4)	75.0
10-15 years	21(18.1)	93.1
over 15 years	08(6.9)	100
Total	116(100)	-

Few teachers (6.9%) had a teaching experience of over 15 years; cumulative percents however revealed that majority of the teachers (72.4%) had a teaching experience of at least five years. At the same time, all the head teachers interviewed had been in the teaching service for over 15 years. ANOVA results for the variation of quality of girl child secondary education with experience were obtained and they are as shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8 ANOVA Results Showing How Quality of Girl Child Education Varied with the Experience of Teachers

Teacher experience	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig. (2 tailed)
Less than five years	32	2.51	0.92	1.92	0.15
5–10 years	55	2.84	0.86		
10–15 years	21	3.23	0.75		
over 15 years	08	3.10	0.75		
Total	116	2.90	0.82		

Table 8 shows that quality of girl child secondary education differed depending on the number of years a teacher had spent in the teaching service. Respondents with a teaching experience of 10–15 years provided high quality girl child secondary education (mean = 3.23). Those with five years of service and below had the lowest potential to deliver quality girl child education (mean = 2.51). Also, F = 1.92 and its sig value was 0.152. The sig value is greater than the rejection level $\alpha = 0.05$ meaning that delivery of quality girl child secondary education did not differ significantly with number of years spent in service at the five percent level of significance.

4.3.3 Level of Commitment of Teachers and Quality of Girl Child Education

The effect of teachers' level of commitment was also analysed. An aggregate index (i.e., commlevel — an acronym for commitment) for all items in relating to teacher's level of commitment was computed and Table 9 gives the associated descriptive.

From Table 9, respondents self rating of level of commitment was low (2.35) with opinions ranging from 2.25 to 2.45 at the 95% confidence interval. Respondents differed slightly in terms of their views regarding level of commitment (std. deviation 0.80). However, respondents' opinions were slightly heaped to the left (Skew 0.57) showing that many respondents' opinions showed a low level of commitment. The commitment level aggregate index (commlevel) was correlated with the quality of girl child secondary education aggregate index (eduqual) using Pearson's Linear Correlation index whose results are as shown in Table 10.

Table 9 Descriptive Statistics on Respondents Self-rating of Level of Commitment

Statistic	Value
Mean	2.35
95% confidence interval Upper	2.45
Lower	2.25
Median	2.22
Standard deviation	0.80
Range	3.10
Skewness	0.57

Table 10 Pearson's Co-relation Coefficient between Level of Commitment and Quality of Girl Child Secondary Education

		Quality of girl child secondary education	Level of commitment
Quality of girl child secondary education	Pearson correlation	1	0.530***
	Sig (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	166	116
Level of commitment	Pearson correlation	0.530***	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	116	116

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

From Table 10 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient for teachers' level of commitment and the quality of girl child secondary education was r = 0.530 with a significance value (p = 0.000) which was less than 0.01. This suggested a high positive correlation between teachers' level of job commitment and quality of secondary education. Thus students' quality of secondary education is positively co- related with teacher's job commitment at the 1% level of significance.

5. Discussion

5.1 Family Background and the Quality of Girl Child Secondary Education

The study examined the influence of family background on the quality of girl child education in Ibanda District. Results of the study showed that family background was positively correlated to quality of girl child education. The findings suggested that girl children from poor family backgrounds are unlikely to receive quality education while those from well do families are likely to receive high quality education. This agrees with the ideas depicted in the HCT which regards education as a human capital investment. It was advance in the HCT that using "cost-benefit" principle, educational achievement of learners depends on the resources invested by households towards education of their children (Almendarez, 2011). Thus, poor family back grounds are incapable of investing enough resources including books, time and money for the purpose of high quality education their girl children.

Whereas secondary education in Uganda is free in USE schools, there are many other costs associated with attainment of secondary education. Mastercard (2018) identified other costs apart from tuition fees as registration and admission fees, cost of uniforms and scholastic materials, fees for examination, subscription fees to PTA subscription fees, boarding fees, meals and provision of other daily monetary demands, transportation costs to and

from school. These costs accrue to a very high amount - not be affordable to all families. Besides, such costs become much enormous when a girl child is being schooled in a private secondary school which relies on tuition fees from students. According to O'Donoghue, Crawfurd, Makaaru, Otieno and Perakis (2018), the largest contribution to lower secondary schooling (63%), comes from households. It is thus logical to assert that family background is an important determinant for quality for girl child secondary education. Improving the quality of girl child education demands a substantial improvement of household income levels.

5.2 School Environment and the Quality of Girl Child Secondary Education

The study also examined the influence of school environment on the quality of girl child education. The study results showed that there was a positive significant relationship between school environment and quality of girl child education. Such a result agree with assertions of Zapata-Roche (2017) who suggested that appropriate learning environments are fundamental for improved quality of education received by students, particularly in socio economically disadvantaged schools. This is supported by Torkar (2014) who suggested that learning occurs when learners interact with the environment. Therefore, if the school environment is of poor quality, then the quality of education is equally poor. It is because of the same views that Mbonteh, Fonkeng, Galy (2016) suggested that absence or poor quality of educational facilities affects quality of education. Thus, to improve the quality of education, schools should invest in the school environments.

5.3 Teacher Quality and Girl Child Secondary Education

The influence of teacher quality on the quality of girl child education was mixed; for example it was found out that there was no statistically significant relationship between teacher qualification and quality of girl child education i.e. the quality of girl child education did not differ significantly with the teacher's level education. This contradicted the findings of Unterhalter et al. (2013) who reported that girls' learning outcomes improve where teachers hold higher-level qualifications. Probably, this could be explained by the fact most the teachers who participated in the study were all qualified though to differing level.

Related to the above, it was also found out that quality of girl child education does not differ with teacher's teaching experience, i.e., the quality of girl child education does not dependent on the level of teaching experience of the teacher. This contradicted the findings of King and Winthrop (2015) who reported that students of experienced teachers have higher learning gains. This could certainly be explained by the fact that most of the teachers in the sampled population were experienced mainly at the level of five years and above.

Regarding teacher commitment, study result revealed that the level of teacher's commitment positively influenced the quality of girl child education i.e. the quality of girl child education increases with increase in teacher's level of commitment. This is in agreement findings of King and Winthrop (2015) who reported that students of experienced teachers have higher learning outcomes compared to students of inexperienced teachers.

6. Conclusions

This study examined the influence of family background, school environment and teacher quality on the quality of girl child secondary education in Ibanda District. We reported that the nature of family background influences the quality of girl child education. The study suggested that poor family background for learners have a negative effect on the quality of girl child education. Based on the study results it is we suggest that all stake holders interested in improving the quality of girl child education should start by improving the quality of families.

This will improve the quality of families and then certainly the investments made towards the education of girl children. The study thus concludes by suggesting that there is a significant positive relationship between family background and quality of girl child education in Ibanda District.

Regarding school environment, study results indicated that a better school environment improves quality of girl child secondary education. We thus concluded that a better school environment was very important for a better quality of girl child secondary education. Based on research findings, it is important for schools and their administrators take practical steps that can improve the quality of their school environments.

Teacher commitment component was higher for the teachers of Ibanda District compared to other components of teacher quality. Surprisingly, it was found out that the experience of teachers and their level of education do not significantly influence the quality of girl child education. However, the level of teacher commitment was an important predictor of quality of girl child secondary education. While these are mixed results, Ibanda District should invest more improving the quality of its teachers so as to improve the quality of girl child secondary education.

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