

School Environment and Students' Retention in Private Secondary Schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso District, Uganda

Kironde William¹, Matovu Musa², Ssali Muhammadi Bisaso³ Nabukeera Madinah⁴

¹*Post graduate student, Department of Education Management and Administration, Faculty of Education, Islamic University in Uganda,*

²*Assoc.Prof. Dr., Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, Islamic University in Uganda*

³*Senior Lecturer., Department of Education Management and Administration, Faculty of Education, Islamic University in Uganda.*

⁴*Assoc.Prof. Dr., Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Studies, Islamic University in Uganda.*

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between school environment and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda. The study was guided by three specific objectives; i) To examine the relationship between school infrastructure and students' retention, ii) To examine the relationship between school culture and students' retention, and iii) To examine the relationship between teacher support and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda. The study took on a correlational research design with a quantitative approach. A sample of 64 respondents was taken into account containing head teachers and teachers from the 4 selected private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district. Both descriptive and correlation analysis were used to answer the study phenomenon. The study revealed that there is a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship between school infrastructure and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda. The study also revealed that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between school culture and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda. Further, the study revealed that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between teacher support and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda. Therefore, the study concludes that school environment such as school infrastructure, school culture, and teacher support has a positive and statistically significant relationship with students' retention in that an enhancement in the different school environments will resultantly lead to an improvement in students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda. The study recommends that the school administrators should ensure classrooms are well-ventilated, not overcrowded, and furnished with appropriate desks, chairs, and learning materials, which increases student comfort, focus, and willingness to stay in school and this might influence students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

Keywords: *School Environment, School Infrastructure, School Culture, Teacher Support, Students' Retention, and Private Secondary Schools.*

Introduction

This study aimed to examine the relationship between school environment and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

Historical Perspective

The school environment has been recognized as a critical factor influencing student retention, with various aspects of the environment physical, social, and psychological, shaping students' decision to stay in school or drop out. Globally, the mid-20th century saw a gradual shift toward acknowledging the role of the physical school environment in student retention. The need for better educational infrastructure became evident and many countries began to shift the focus towards improving school facilities to enhance learning conditions so as to improve student retention (Wohlgemuth, Whalen, Sullivan, Nading, Shelley & Wang, 2017). However, the early 21st century saw a more holistic understanding of the school environment, emphasizing that student retention is influenced by a mixture of physical, emotional, social, and academic factors. This led to schools around the world to recognize the significance of creating a positive, inclusive, and safe school environment that supports all aspects of a student's well-being to improve learning outcomes and student retention (Cooper & Frantz, 2020).

Theoretical Perspective

The study was driven by the Ecological Systems Theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner in 1979. The theory offers a comprehensive view of how a student's development is influenced by different environmental systems. According to this theory, the school environment is part of the microsystem, which includes immediate surroundings like family, peers, and school. The microsystem directly influences a student's behavior, attitudes, and academic outcomes (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). According to El Zaatari and Maalouf (2022) the theory is pertinent to student retention in that the quality of the school environment, including physical infrastructure, teacher-student relationships, and peer dynamics, can directly affect a student's choice to remain in or leave school. A positive school environment can boost student engagement, motivation, and emotional well-being, increasing retention rates (El Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022). This theory was applicable to this study as it affords a connection between school environment and students' retention.

Contextual Perspective

The study was carried out among private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district examining the association between school environment and students' retention. This was considered due to no research conducted in the district relative to environment and students' retention particularly in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district. Additionally, Bweyogerere in Wakiso district was considered since students' retention in most of the secondary schools in Wakiso district is still pitiable branded with an increased absenteeism rates, increased dropout rates, and a decline in school completion rates among students in the district (Wakiso District Local Government, 2021).

Conceptual Perspective

School environment refers to the physical, social, and psychological conditions in which students learn and interact. It encompasses various factors that influence the overall atmosphere of the school, affecting students' experiences, behaviors, and academic outcomes (Qvortrup & Lykkegaard, 2022). Students' retention refers to the ability of a school or educational institution to keep students enrolled and engaged in their studies over a specific period, typically from one academic year to the next. It is a measure of how many students continue their education within the same institution without dropping out or transferring to another school (Muljana & Luo, 2019). For the case of this study, school environment was conceptualized in terms of school infrastructure, school culture, and teacher support, while students' retention was conceptualized in terms of enrollment rates, school completion rates, dropout rates, absenteeism rates, as well as transition rates among others.

Statement of the problem

The government of Uganda has implemented several policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing student retention through improving the school environment in the different districts. These initiatives focus on creating safe, inclusive, and supportive educational environments, recognizing their critical role in improving student retention and overall educational outcomes. For instance, the Ministry of Education and Sports has implemented a policy on school inspection and monitoring which aims at ensuring that schools maintain high standards of infrastructure, teaching quality, and student welfare, creating an environment that is safe, healthy, and conducive to learning, which are all important for students' retention (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2018).

However, despite these efforts, students' retention in most of the secondary schools in Wakiso district is still pitiable branded with an increased absenteeism rates, increased dropout rates, and a decline in school completion rates among students in the district (Wakiso District Local Government, 2021). Evidence indicates an increase in school dropout rates from 16.4% in 2018 to 24.3% in 2021 of students in secondary schools in Wakiso district (Wakiso District Local Government, 2021). This has consequently resulted into limited career prospects, decreased economic mobility, increased vulnerability to substance abuse and involvement in criminal activities, strained family relationships, increased illiteracy rates, and a decline in school reputation among others. Therefore, it is due to this evidence that the study in play examined the relationship between school environment on students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The main study objective was to examine the relationship between school environment and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

Specific Objectives

- i. To examine the relationship between school infrastructure and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.
- ii. To examine the relationship between school culture and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.
- iii. To examine the relationship between teacher support and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

Study Hypotheses

The specific objectives were directed by the following alternative hypotheses;

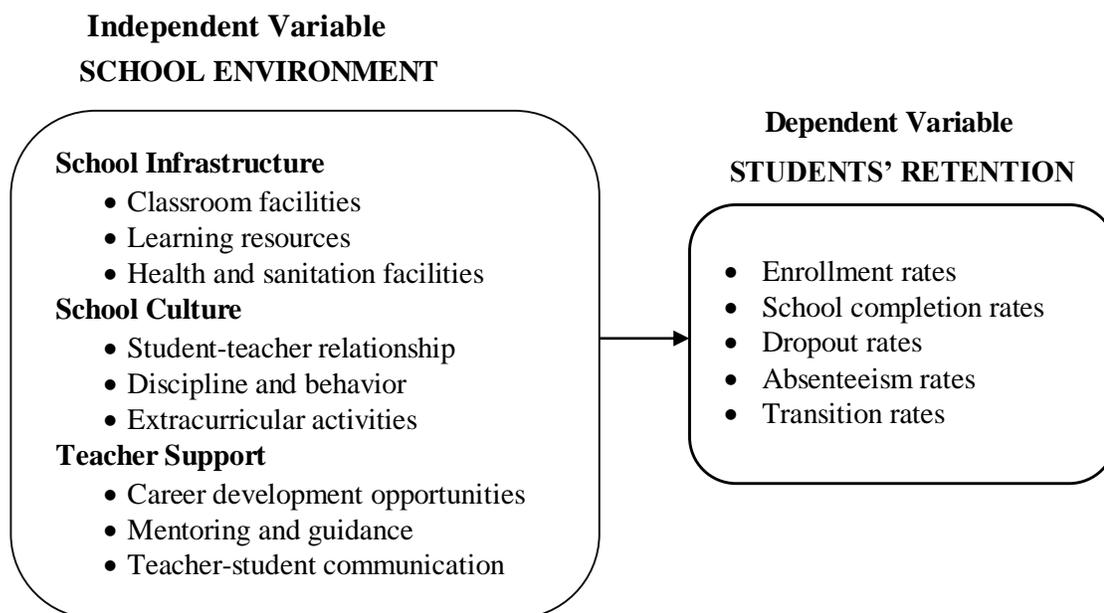
Ha1: There is a statistical and significant relationship between school infrastructure and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

Ha2: There is a statistical and significant relationship between school culture and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

Ha3: There is a statistical and significant relationship between teacher support and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework provides an illustrative diagram on the linkage between School Environment and Students' Retention.



Literature Review

School Environment and Students' Retention

The school environment plays a significant role in influencing students' retention, as it directly impacts students' engagement, motivation, and general well-being. A positive school environment can foster a sense of belonging, academic success, and personal growth, all of which contribute to students' decisions to stay in

school (Dallaseh, 2025). According to Okello, Sichari and Odera (2017) the physical conditions of a school, including its infrastructure, classrooms, facilities, and resources, affects students' comfort, safety, and overall learning experience. A well-maintained and adequately equipped school environment can positively impact student retention in several ways. The authors assert that students are likely to keep in school if the physical space is safe, clean, and comfortable. This includes well-lit classrooms, functional furniture, access to clean water, and sanitary facilities. These conditions are essential for keeping students engaged and healthy, which is crucial for their attendance and long-term retention (Okello et al., 2017).

The school environment includes the social environment that refers to the relationships and interactions students experience with peers, teachers, and staff. A supportive, inclusive, and positive social environment is vital for student retention. Positive and supportive relationships between teachers and students can help students feel valued and understood, fostering their motivation and academic commitment. When students feel that teachers care about their success and well-being, they are more likely to stay in school (Qvortrup & Lykkegaard, 2022). Additionally, the authors argue that a friendly and collaborative peer environment encourages social integration, which plays a significant role in student retention. Bullying, social isolation, and peer conflict can drive students away from school, but a positive social environment promotes engagement and a sense of belonging, which motivates students to remain enrolled (Qvortrup & Lykkegaard, 2022).

A study by Oginga and Ayienda (2023) found that school environment such as school support systems significantly influence students' retention in public secondary schools in Rachuonyo South Sub-County, Homabay County. The study revealed that an increase in the school support systems positively and significantly lead to an improvement in students' retention in public secondary schools in Rachuonyo South Sub-County, Homabay County. The authors asserted that strong support systems within the school, such as counseling services, peer mentorship, and extracurricular activities, can also help students navigate personal challenges and maintain their academic focus. Schools with robust support systems tend to see higher retention rates, as students are more likely to stay if they feel they have someone to turn to for guidance and help (Oginga & Ayienda, 2023).

According to Kyakimwa, Muhammad, Wanjala, Turyamureeba and Udoka (2024) school environment comprises of the psychological environment which encompasses the emotional climate of the school, including the level of stress, motivation, and emotional well-being that students experience. Students who feel they belong and are part of a community within the school are more likely to stay engaged in their studies and remain enrolled. A school culture that promotes inclusivity, respect, and emotional support can reduce feelings of alienation and increase retention. The authors also assert that a positive school environment that fosters intrinsic motivation can encourage students to persist in their education. When students feel that their efforts will lead to success and that their academic contributions are valued, they are more likely to remain in school. Schools that offer engaging and relevant curricula help keep students interested and motivated (Kyakimwa et al., 2024). In addition, Cooper and Frantz (2020) argued that schools that provide mental health resources, such as counseling services and programs to address stress, anxiety, or depression, contribute to students' overall

well-being. Mental health support ensures that students can cope with challenges that might otherwise drive them to drop out.

A safe and disciplined school environment is essential for student retention. If students feel unsafe, whether due to physical threats or emotional distress, they are less likely to stay enrolled. Schools that maintain effective discipline policies, prevent bullying, and ensure the safety of students are more likely to retain them (Inekiengha, Olachi & Obiomma, 2024). The authors also argued that when students feel physically safe and emotionally supported, they are more likely to stay engaged in their studies and remain in school. Conversely, environments with high levels of violence, bullying, or discrimination can lead to increased dropout rates (Inekiengha et al., 2024). Additionally, Okello et al. (2017) postulated that schools that set clear behavioral expectations and promote positive student behavior through programs such as restorative justice or conflict resolution contribute to a more conducive environment for learning, which can improve retention rates.

The availability of academic support services within the school environment directly impacts student retention. This includes tutoring, mentorship, and additional learning resources for students who are struggling academically. Schools that offer extra support increase the likelihood of students staying in school by helping them succeed academically. Participating in sports, arts, clubs, and other extracurricular activities can improve student retention by making students feel more connected to their school. These activities often serve as additional motivational tools that foster engagement and a sense of achievement, encouraging students to stay involved in their education (Onafowo, Egwunyenga & Anho, 2024). The authors also assert that schools that identify at-risk students early and provide targeted interventions (such as remedial classes, personalized learning plans, or additional mentoring) are more likely to retain these students. Academic interventions help students overcome challenges and build confidence, which reduces the likelihood of dropping out (Onafowo et al., 2024).

An inclusive and culturally responsive school environment can positively impact retention by acknowledging and respecting the diverse backgrounds of students. Schools that create an inclusive environment, where students from diverse cultural, socio-economic, and linguistic backgrounds feel valued, are more likely to retain these students. Inclusivity reduces feelings of alienation and promotes engagement by making all students feel respected and supported (Kassab, Rathan, Taylor & Hamdy, 2024). Additionally, the authors also argued that schools that create an environment that is sensitive to gender issues and promotes equal opportunities for all genders, including specific measures to retain female students (e.g., providing sanitary products, addressing gender-based violence), are likely to see better retention, especially among marginalized groups (Kassab et al., 2024).

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a correlational research design with a quantitative approach. A correlational research design is focusses on examining for a relationship between variables in the particular population of study (Kassu,

2019). Hence, this research design facilitated the scholar in examining the association between school environment and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district. The quantitative approach allowed the researcher to get the quantitative data that was used to give an understanding to the study phenomenon.

Target Population and Sample Size

The study looked a target population of 6 private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district (Wakiso District Local Government, 2021). But because of the time factor, the researcher considered 4 private secondary schools out of which a sample was drawn that was involved in the study. The study considered a sample size of 64 respondents which constituted of head teachers and teachers selected from the 4 selected private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district to provide the quantitative data that was used to provide answers to the study objectives.

Sampling Procedure

The researcher used both convenient sampling and simple random sampling to draw respondents who were involved in the study. Convenient sampling involved the scholar choosing participants who were available and accessible and this was used to pick the head teachers. Simple random sampling was used to draw teachers from the various selected private schools to be involved in the study. Simple random sampling gives an even probability of being selected into the sample to each of the individuals in the study population (Elfil & Negida, 2017).

Data Collection Methods

Questionnaire Survey Method

A questionnaire survey method is a means of getting information from participants using a series of questions and other prompts (Mathiyazhagan, 2018). The questionnaire survey method was important so as to get uniform information that ensured data comparability using easily understandable structured questions. Thus, this method was used as it allowed the scholar to get and collect quantitative data from participants in the shortest time possible.

Data Collection Instruments

Structured Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire is an instrument utilized to gather all the necessary information from participants containing closed-ended questions with predetermined responses out of which respondents are required to pick (Acheung, 2019). Structured questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data from head teachers and teachers containing closed-ended questions with encoded answers which were administered directly to participants in the selected private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district. The structured questionnaires were engaged as they entail little time and gather much information on the study phenomenon.

Data Analysis

The study used both descriptive and correlation analysis methods in examining the quantitative primary data gathered. Descriptive analysis was utilized when evaluating participants' demographics given as frequencies and percentages. So as to examine the association between the independent variable and the dependent variable, Spearman's rank correlation analysis was used to give the empirical evidence on hypotheses at a 0.01 level of significance. Spearman's Rank Correlation measures the association between two nominal or ordinal variables (Jerrold, 2016).

Ethical Consideration

The researcher got an introductory letter from Islamic University in Uganda as a prerequisite for acquiring permission from administrators in the various schools to partake the study in their schools before undertaking the study. The researcher also sought for individuals' consent to be involved in the study before questionnaires were administered. Additionally, the scholar accounted for respondents' confidentiality and information provided as this is a crucial ethical pre-requisite in any survey.

Study Findings

The findings given here constitute of descriptive statistics on the respondents' demographic composition and correlation analysis on the study objectives.

Findings on the Demographic Compositions

The study evaluated the respondents' demographic composition from the various selected private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district and results are shown in Table 1;

Table 1: Demographic Composition of Respondents

| Demographic Composition | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Category | Items | Frequency | Percentage |
| Gender | Male | 36 | 56.2 |
| | Female | 28 | 43.8 |
| | Total | 64 | 100.0 |
| Age Groups | 25-30 years | 10 | 15.6 |
| | 31-35 years | 19 | 29.7 |
| | 36-40 years | 12 | 18.8 |
| | Above 40 years | 23 | 35.9 |
| | Total | 64 | 100.0 |
| Level of Education | Diploma | 4 | 6.3 |
| | Bachelors | 55 | 85.9 |
| | Masters | 5 | 7.8 |
| | Total | 64 | 100.0 |
| Marital Status | Married | 42 | 65.6 |
| | Single | 22 | 34.4 |
| | Total | 64 | 100.0 |
| Time Worked at the School | 1-3 years | 11 | 17.2 |
| | 4-5 years | 22 | 34.4 |
| | Above 5 years | 31 | 48.4 |
| | Total | 64 | 100.0 |

Source: Primary Data (2025)

From Table 1, the results indicate that majority 36 (56.2%) of the respondents who participated in the study from selected private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district were males and 28 (43.8%) of the respondents were females.

The study findings also indicate that a bigger proportion 23 (35.9%) of the respondents were aged above 40 years, followed by 19 (29.7%) of the respondents who were aged 31-35 years, then 12 (18.8%) of the respondents who were aged 36-40 years, and the least proportion 10 (15.6%) of the respondents were aged 25-30 years.

In addition, the study findings indicate that majority 55 (85.9%) of the respondents had attained a bachelors' level of education, followed by 5 (7.8%) of the respondents who had attained a masters' level of education, and a few 4 (6.3%) of the respondents who had attained a diploma level of education.

The study findings additionally indicate that majority 42 (65.6%) of the respondents who participated in the study were married and the least proportion 22 (34.4%) of the respondents were single.

The study further revealed that a bigger proportion 31 (48.4%) of the respondents had worked for a period of over 5 years at the respective schools, followed by 22 (34.4%) of the respondents who had worked for a period of 4-5 years at the respective schools, and the least proportion 11 (17.2%) of the respondents had a worked for a period of 1-3 years at the respective schools.

Findings on the Objectives of the Study

This section presents the findings in relation to the specific study objectives.

Relationship between School Infrastructure and Students' Retention in Private Secondary Schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso District, Uganda

The study sought to examine the relationship between school infrastructure and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda. The relationship was analyzed using Spearman's Rank correlation analysis and the findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between School Infrastructure and Students' Retention in Private Secondary Schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso District, Uganda

| | | School Infrastructure | Students' Retention |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| School Infrastructure | Spearman's Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .795** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| | N | 64 | 64 |
| Students' Retention | Spearman's Correlation Coefficient | .795** | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | N | 64 | 64 |

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

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The study findings in Table 2 indicate that there is a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship between school infrastructure and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda ($r = 0.795$, $N = 64$, $P\text{-value} = 0.000$) at a 0.01 level of significance. The findings imply that an improvement in school infrastructure strongly and significantly leads to an enhancement in students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

Relationship between School Culture and Students' Retention in Private Secondary Schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso District, Uganda

The study also sought to examine the relationship between school culture and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda. The relationship was analyzed using Spearman's Rank correlation analysis and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between School Culture and Students' Retention in Private Secondary Schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso District, Uganda

| | | School Culture | Students' Retention |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| School Culture | Spearman's Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .582** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| | N | 64 | 64 |
| Students' Retention | Spearman's Correlation Coefficient | .582** | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | N | 64 | 64 |

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

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The study findings in Table 3 indicate that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between school culture and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda ($r = 0.582$, $N = 64$, $P\text{-value} = 0.000$) at a 0.01 level of significance. The findings imply that an enhancement in school culture substantially and significantly leads to an improvement in students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

Relationship between Teacher Support and Students' Retention in Private Secondary Schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso District, Uganda

The study further sought to examine the relationship between teacher support and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda. The relationship was analyzed using Spearman's Rank correlation analysis and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Teacher Support and Students' Retention in Private Secondary Schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso District, Uganda

| | | Teacher Support | Students' Retention |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Teacher Support | Spearman's Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .642** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| | N | 64 | 64 |
| Students' Retention | Spearman's Correlation Coefficient | .642** | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | N | 64 | 64 |

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

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The study findings in Table 4 indicate that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between teacher support and students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda ($r = 0.642$, $N = 64$, $P\text{-value} = 0.000$) at a 0.01 level of significance. The findings imply that an improvement in teacher support considerably and significantly leads to an improvement in students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

Conclusion

The study concludes that school environment such as school infrastructure, school culture, and teacher support has a positive and statistically significant relationship with students' retention in that an enhancement in the different school environments will resultantly lead to an improvement in students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the school administrators should ensure classrooms are well-ventilated, not overcrowded, and furnished with appropriate desks, chairs, and learning materials, which increases student comfort, focus, and willingness to stay in school and this might influence students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

The study also recommends that school administrators should foster a welcoming culture through respectful teacher-student relationships, inclusive practices for children with disabilities, and anti-discrimination measures which might resultantly lead to an improvement in students' retention in private secondary schools in Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, Uganda.

References

Acheung, A. K. (2019). *Structured Questionnaires*. Dordrecht: Springer. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-94-007-0753-5_2888

- Cooper, L. & Frantz, K. F. (2020). The Relationship between Classroom Environment and Student Course Attrition and Perceptions of Engagement. *Journal of Learning Spaces*, 9(2), 93-102.
- Dallasheh, W. (2025). Enhancing Student Retention Through School Coherence: The Mediating Role of School Climate. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, 4(2), 1614-1633.
- El Zaatari, W. & Maalouf, I. (2022). How the Bronfenbrenner Bio-ecological System Theory Explains the Development of Students' Sense of Belonging to School? *Journal of Public Health Issues and Practices*, 12(4), 170-178.
- Elfil, M. & Negida, A. (2017). Sampling Methods in Clinical Research: An Educational Review. *Journal of Academic Emergency Medicine*, 5(1), 52-69.
- Ettekal, A. & Mahoney, J. L. (2017). *Ecological Systems Theory*. Texas, America: SAGE.
- Inekiengha, D. M., Olachi, N. R., & Obiomma, E. C. (2024). Impact of School Learning Environment on Students' Dropout in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Psychology & Social Development*, 12(4), 31-39.
- Jerrold, H. (2016). *Encyclopedia of Biostatistics: Spearman's Rank Correlation*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Kassab, S. E., Rathan, R., Taylor, D. C. M., & Hamdy, H. (2024). The Impact of the Educational Environment on Student Engagement and Academic Performance in Health Professions Education. *BMC Medical Education*, 24(1), 127-141.
- Kassu, J. S. (2019). *Research Design and Methodology*. London, United Kingdom: IntechOpen Limited.
- Kyakimwa, S., Muhammad, T., Wanjala, G. J., Turyamureeba, S., & Udoka, H. E. (2024). Impact of School Environment on Retention of Learners with Disabilities in Universal Primary Schools in Africa: A Review. *IDOSR Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 10(1), 16-22.
- Mathiyazhagan, T. (2018). *Survey Research Method*. New Delhi: National Institute of Family & Welfare.
- Ministry of Education and Sports. (2018). *Education System in Uganda: Policies and Regulations*. Kampala: Government of the Republic of Uganda.
- Muljana, P. S. & Luo, T. (2019). Factors Contributing to Student Retention in Online Learning and Recommended Strategies for Improvement: A Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Information Technology Education Research*, 18(1), 118-131.
- Oginga, M. O. & Ayienda, C. (2023). School Determinants Influencing Students' Retention Rates in Public Secondary Schools in Rachuonyo South Sub-County, Homabay County. *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 6(2), 205-214.
- Okello, L. M., Sichari, M., & Odera, F. (2017). Influence of School Environment Characteristics on Retention of Secondary School Students in Homa Bay County, Kenya. *International Journal of Academic Scientific Research*, 5(1), 237-246.

Onafowo, M. A., Egwunyenga, E. J., & Anho, J. E. (2024). School Environment, Teachers' Retention and Students' Academic Achievement in Catholic Secondary Schools in Lagos State. *International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning*, 11(1), 61-67.

Qvortrup, A. & Lykkegaard, E. (2022). Study Environment Factors Associated with Retention in Higher Education. *Higher Education Pedagogies*, 7(1), 37-64.

Wakiso District Local Government. (2021). *Wakiso District Local Government Education Performance Report 2021*. Kampala, Uganda: Wakiso District Local Government.

Wohlgemuth, D., Whalen, D., Sullivan, J., Nading, C., Shelley, M., & Wang, Y. R. (2017). Financial, Academic, and Environmental Influences on the Retention and Graduation of Students. *Journal on College Student Retention*, 8(4), 457-475.

Appendices

Appendix I: Structured Questionnaire for Head Teachers and Teachers

Dear respondent,

You have been chosen as a respondent to take part in this study and the responses you will provide will be treated with ultimate confidentiality. The information you will provide will only be used for the required study purposes. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to pull out at any time.

Do you consent to participate in this study? Agree or Disagree

Instructions: Please tick the most appropriate response of your choice

Section A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

1. What is your Gender?

1. Male 2. Female

2. What is your age group?

1. 25-30 years 2. 31-35 years 3. 36-40 years 4. Above 40 years

3. What is your highest level of education?

1. Diploma 2. Bachelors Masters

4. What is your marital status?

1. Married 2. Single

5. For how long have you worked at this secondary school?

1. 1-3 years 2. 4-5 years 3. Above 5 years

SECTION B: SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Use a Likert scale for this section where 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D), 3= Not Sure (NS), 4= Agree (A), and 5= Strongly Agree (SA).

Instructions: Please tick where appropriate using the scale above that best describes your opinion to the statements related to different dimensions of School Environment;

Part I: School Infrastructure

| No. | School Infrastructure | SD | D | NS | A | SA |
|-----|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| 1. | There is regular building and maintenance of classroom facilities with teaching and learning resources at the school | | | | | |
| 2. | There is availability of well-stocked libraries and science laboratories at the school | | | | | |
| 3. | There is availability of adequate outdoor facilities such as playgrounds and sports facilities at the school | | | | | |
| 4. | There exists an effective security system with security guards, surveillance cameras, gates, and fences to protect students at the school | | | | | |
| 5. | There are adequate and well-maintained health and sanitation facilities at the school | | | | | |

Part II: School Culture

| No. | School Culture | SD | D | NS | A | SA |
|-----|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| 1. | There are effective interactions between teachers and students at the school | | | | | |
| 2. | There is availability of extracurricular activities through a variety of school clubs at the school | | | | | |
| 3. | There are policies, practices, and expectations surrounding student behavior and discipline at the school | | | | | |
| 4. | The school effectively embraces and promotes awareness of different cultures, identities, and backgrounds at the school | | | | | |
| 5. | There is effective engagement of the school and the community such as parents at the school | | | | | |

Part III: Teacher Support

| No. | Teacher Support | SD | D | NS | A | SA |
|-----|--|----|---|----|---|----|
| 1. | The teachers provide academic support through instruction assistance and feedback to students at the school | | | | | |
| 2. | The teachers provide emotional and psychological support to students at the school | | | | | |
| 3. | The teachers regularly engage students in mentorship, and counseling and guidance programs or sessions at the school | | | | | |
| 4. | The teachers provide career guidance and development support to students at the school | | | | | |
| 5. | The teachers provide social support to students by fostering and encouraging peer interactions at the school | | | | | |

SECTION C: STUDENTS' RETENTION

Use a Likert scale for this section where 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D), 3= Not Sure (NS), 4= Agree (A), and 5= Strongly Agree (SA).

Instructions: Please tick where appropriate using the scale above that best describes your perception about the statements related to Students' Retention;

| No. | Students' Retention | SD | D | NS | A | SA |
|-----|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| 1. | There is an increase in the student enrollment rates at the school | | | | | |
| 2. | There is an increase in the students' school completion rates at the school | | | | | |
| 3. | There is a reduction in the number of students who drop out of school at the school | | | | | |
| 4. | There is a reduction in the students' absenteeism rates at the school | | | | | |
| 5. | There is a reduction in the number of students who transfer or transition from the school to other community school at the school | | | | | |