

Assessment Methods and Academic Performance of pupils in Government Aided Primary
Schools in Pader District.

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Declaration

I, John Bosco Ochan, hereby declare that this Dissertation entitled “*Assessment Methods and Academic Performance of pupils in Government Aided Primary Schools in Pader District. A Case of Puranga town council*” is my own original work and has never been submitted to any institution of higher learning for any academic award.

Signed 

Date: 

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22/U/2028/MFC/PS

Approval

This Dissertation, entitled "*Assessment Methods and Academic Performance in Government Aided Primary Schools in Pader District*," was written under our supervision. We therefore approve it for examination.

Signed 

Date: 28/5/26

Dr. George Opio (PhD)

Signed 

Date: 23/5/2026

. David Monk (PhD)

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved father Mr. Moro Faustino and Mrs. Cecilia Moro, whose unwavering love, wisdom, and care have profoundly shaped who I am today. Your guidance, support, and prayers have been my constant pillars of strength. To my wife Anena Dorish and my precious children; Franklyn, Walter, Blessing, and Abigail, may this achievement inspire you to pursue your dreams with passion, resilience, and determination. This work stands as a testament to our family's bond and shared strength, reminding us that together we can overcome any challenge and achieve greatness.

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of assessment methods on academic performance in Government Aided Primary Schools in Pader District, specifically in Puranga Town Council, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The specific objectives were to explore the assessment methods, assess the level of academic performance, and establish the relationship between assessment methods and academic performance. A mixed-methods design was adopted, with data collected from a sample of 200 respondents, including teachers, headteachers, education officers, and PTA members. Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's coefficient correlation, while qualitative data from interviews and document reviews were thematically analyzed. Findings revealed that Research Question 1 (assessment methods) showed schools used a mix of continuous, formative, and summative assessments, with continuous methods being most common. For Research Question 2 (levels of academic performance), findings indicated moderate levels of academic performance, with qualitative data highlighting disparities based on assessment consistency. Research Question 3 (relationship between assessment methods and academic performance) showed a strong positive correlation: continuous ($r = .795$ $p < 0.01$), formative ($r = .787$ $p < 0.01$), and summative ($r = .727$ $p < 0.01$). Qualitative findings further supported that continuous and formative assessments enhanced learning outcomes when used effectively. The study concluded that consistent application of varied assessment methods especially continuous and formative positively influenced academic performance. It recommended strengthening teacher capacity through training, enforcing school-level policies on assessment, improving monitoring, and providing necessary assessment resources to support effective teaching and learning in rural primary schools.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Academic performance is a significant issue in education and research worldwide. This is particularly true for government-aided primary schools, where a considerable percentage of students consistently perform poorly in national examinations (UNEB, 2024). In response, the government has introduced several interventions to improve academic performance in these schools. These interventions include Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs aimed at enhancing teachers' instructional methods, improving assessment techniques, and providing additional instructional materials (Okumu & Opio, 2024). Studies have shown that assessment methods play a crucial role in influencing academic performance, particularly summative and formative assessments.

This chapter presents the background to the study, the problem statement, the general objective, specific objectives, research questions, the geographical scope, the overall scope of the study, and the conceptual framework.

1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 Historical Perspective

Academic performance is a key indicator of educational quality, and it has been a subject of interest for researchers and Educators alike (Hattie,2022). Globally, Europeans academic history spans through centuries, encompassing junior schools, colleges and universities. In the Medieval period, education was largely reserved for the elites with monasteries and cathedral schools providing basic skills in literacy and numeracy (Haskins,1923). This was also influenced by urbanisation which attracted high population and led to growing demands for education, with curricula focusing on Latin and Greek (Marrou,1956). In the 19th and 20th centuries, education reforms were adopted to complement compulsory education policies and development of standardised curricula (Durkheim,1938). To this effect, the development of grading systems enabled comprehensive assessment of students' academic performance (Bloom,1956), and a shift

from oral exams and disputation to written tests with emphasis on critical thinking, problem solving and research skills (Gardner,1983). In junior schools, students were evaluated through a combination of class assignments, written tests and oral examinations. In colleges, the curricula were expanded to include modern languages, sciences and humanities while at university level, assessments rigorously included exams, essays, theses and dissertations to evaluate their knowledge and critical thinking skills which contribute to academic performance (Rashdall,1936). Currently, Europeans education systems prioritise student-centred learning, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Africa's historical education context is fairly complex given that the introduction of education to the continent was largely related to colonialism, and to date it is influenced by numerous factors ranging from socio-economic, geographic, political and study habits. A study conducted in Ghana by Addai,M.(2013) on Socio-economic status and academic performance found that inadequate provision of education materials as a result of low socio- economic statuses of parents affect students' academic performance. The influence by colonial legacies makes Africa's education systems differ across the continent in terms of courses and durations. However, at university levels the use of Grade Point Average (GPA) to assess academic performance cuts across, whereas grading of performance is applied at all levels from primary up to secondary.

Academic performance in primary schools in East Africa as well as Uganda has evolved significantly over the years, influenced by various educational policies, socio-economic factors, and government interventions. Historically, Uganda's education system has undergone multiple reforms aimed at improving access, quality, and overall academic achievement. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, teacher shortages, and disparities between rural and urban schools have persisted, affecting students' academic outcomes (Ssekamwa, 2000).

Before the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997, primary school education in Uganda was largely inaccessible to children from low-income families. The cost of tuition and school requirements limited enrolment, leading to high illiteracy rates, particularly in rural areas. Academic performance was generally low due to limited school infrastructure, inadequate learning materials, and untrained teachers. According to the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), pass rates in national primary examinations during the early 1990s

were below 50%, with most pupils struggling in subjects like mathematics and English (UNEB, 1995).

The introduction of UPE in 1997 marked a turning point in Uganda's primary education system. The policy led to a significant increase in enrollment, rising from 2.5 million in 1996 to 8.2 million by 2010 (Ministry of Education and Sports [MoES], 2014). Despite this progress, concerns about academic performance remained. Studies revealed that the rapid expansion of primary education led to overcrowded classrooms, a decline in teacher-pupil ratios (from 1:40 in 1996 to 1:80 in some schools by 2005), and a drop in learning quality (Nassaka, 2009). Reports from UNEB indicated that national examination pass rates fluctuated, with an average of 64% of pupils passing the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) between 2000 and 2015, but with significant disparities between urban and rural schools (UNEB, 2016).

Several factors have historically shaped academic performance in Ugandan primary schools. One key factor is teacher quality and availability. Before the 1980s, Uganda faced a critical shortage of trained teachers, exacerbated by political instability and economic decline. The government's efforts to expand teacher training programs in the 1990s and early 2000s improved the situation, but the challenge of low teacher motivation due to poor salaries and working conditions persisted (MoES, 2014). Research indicates that schools with well-trained teachers have consistently outperformed those with unqualified or underqualified teaching staff. A study by UWEZO (2018) found that in 2017, only 30% of primary school pupils in Uganda had acquired grade-appropriate literacy and numeracy skills by Primary Three, partly due to ineffective teaching methods.

Another significant factor has been assessment methods. Historically, Uganda's primary education system relied heavily on summative assessments, particularly the PLE, which determines progression to secondary education. While this system provides a standardized measure of performance, critics argue that it encourages rote memorization rather than critical thinking. Over the years, educational experts have called for a greater emphasis on formative assessments, such as continuous assessment tests, to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of pupil learning and progress (Nassaka, 2009).

In recent years, academic performance in Uganda's primary schools has shown mixed results. According to UNEB, the PLE pass rate in 2020 was 81.2%, a significant improvement from previous decades (UNEB, 2021). However, disparities remain, with urban schools outperforming

rural schools due to better resources, infrastructure, and access to qualified teachers. For example, in 2020, Kampala district recorded an 89% pass rate, while districts in northern Uganda, including Pader, had an average pass rate of 55% (MoES, 2021).

Government interventions, such as the introduction of the Teacher Incentive Framework and school feeding programs, have aimed to improve academic performance, particularly in rural areas. Nonetheless, challenges such as absenteeism, early dropouts, and inadequate learning materials continue to hinder progress. A report by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) indicated that in 2019, only 57% of pupils who enrolled in primary one completed primary seven, highlighting the need for further reforms to enhance academic performance and retention rates (UBOS, 2020).

Despite these challenges, efforts to improve assessment methods and learning environments continue to shape Uganda's primary education landscape. Innovations such as digital learning tools, competency-based curricula, and teacher training programs are being explored to enhance academic outcomes. Moving forward, addressing issues such as teacher motivation, school infrastructure, and equitable resource distribution will be crucial in ensuring sustained improvements in primary school academic performance (MoES, 2021).

Globally, the evolution of assessment methods in education has been pivotal in shaping academic performance outcomes. Historically, assessments have transitioned from oral recitations in the early 19th century to more standardized testing formats that emerged in the mid-20th century. These standardized tests became the benchmark for academic performance in many countries, particularly in the United States, where the SAT and ACT have long been used to gauge student readiness for college (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). This evolution reflects a growing emphasis on measurable outcomes in education, driven by the belief that standardized testing can provide an objective measure of student achievement.

In Europe, the historical development of assessment methods was influenced significantly by the introduction of the Bologna Process in 1999, which aimed to standardize higher education systems across European countries. This initiative also trickled down to primary and secondary education, where formative and summative assessments began to be integrated into teaching practices to ensure alignment with broader educational standards (Serrano et al., 2021). The shift

towards a competency-based assessment framework has been a critical turning point in European education, leading to a more holistic approach in evaluating student performance.

In Asia, particularly in countries like Japan and South Korea, the historical perspective on assessment has been dominated by high-stakes examinations. These exams have traditionally determined students' academic futures, reflecting a deep-rooted cultural emphasis on education as a pathway to success. However, in recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the limitations of these methods, prompting educational reforms aimed at incorporating more diverse forms of assessment, including project-based and formative assessments, to foster creativity and critical thinking (Park & Byun, 2020).

Africa's history with educational assessment methods has been heavily influenced by colonial legacies, with many countries initially adopting the British or French systems of education. These systems prioritized summative assessments, particularly final exams, as the primary measure of student achievement. Over time, however, African countries have started to develop more localized assessment methods that better reflect the needs and contexts of their educational systems. For instance, in Kenya, the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) introduced in 2017 represents a significant shift from the traditional exam-oriented approach to a more holistic assessment of student abilities (Komba & Mwandangi, 2019).

In East Africa, particularly in Uganda, the historical approach to assessment in primary schools has been largely exam-centric, with the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) being the culminating point of primary education. This exam has traditionally determined students' progression to secondary education and has been a critical indicator of academic performance in government-aided schools. However, the reliance on PLE has also been criticized for its narrow focus on rote learning and memorization, leading to calls for a more balanced approach that includes continuous assessments (Nabukenya, 2021).

1.1.2 Theoretical background

Social Constructivist Learning Theory, developed by Jean Piaget (1950) and expanded by Lev Vygotsky (1978), asserts that learning is an active process in which pupils construct knowledge based on prior experiences and interactions. Piaget's theory highlights that children pass through cognitive development stages that shape their ability to learn new concepts. Vygotsky introduced

the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which suggests that pupils learn best when supported by teachers or peers in tasks slightly beyond their current abilities. These concepts reinforce the idea that effective learning happens when pupils are actively engaged in the learning process rather than passively receiving information (Piaget, 1950; Vygotsky, 1978).

One of the core assumptions of social constructivism is that learning should be student-centered, allowing pupils to explore and develop their own understanding of concepts. The theory assumes that pupils learn best when they are encouraged to make connections between new knowledge and what they already know. Additionally, social constructivism holds that social interactions play a crucial role in learning, as collaborative discussions and problem-solving activities enhance understanding. In assessment, constructivism suggests that formative assessments such as quizzes, peer evaluations, and project-based tasks are more effective in tracking students' progress and improving performance than solely relying on high-stakes summative assessments (Bruner, 1960; Vygotsky, 1978).

Social constructivist Learning Theory strengthens assessment by promoting techniques that encourage active participation and meaningful feedback. Instead of simply testing what pupils remember, assessments based on constructivist principles evaluate their ability to apply knowledge in different contexts. In Puranga Town Council, where many pupils struggle with academic performance due to rote learning and exam pressure, integrating constructivist assessment methods could significantly enhance engagement and retention. Teachers can implement classroom discussions, continuous feedback, and hands-on learning activities to improve students' understanding and performance (Piaget, 1950; Bruner, 1960).

Social Constructivist Learning Theory suggests that assessments should be integrated into the learning process rather than used solely as a tool for grading. Formative assessments such as classroom discussions, reflective journals, and interactive assignments allow pupils to demonstrate their understanding in real-time. This approach provides teachers with insights into individual learning needs, enabling them to adjust teaching strategies accordingly. In government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, where many pupils face learning challenges, formative assessments can help identify academic weaknesses early and provide targeted interventions (Piaget, 1950; Vygotsky, 1978).

A key strength of Social constructivist assessments is that they encourage critical thinking and problem-solving. Instead of focusing on rote memorization, these assessments help pupils develop a deeper understanding of subjects by applying knowledge to real-life situations. For instance, instead of testing pupils with multiple-choice questions alone, teachers could use oral presentations or group projects to evaluate comprehension. This shift from traditional assessment methods aligns with global education trends that emphasize skill-based learning over passive knowledge retention (Bruner, 1960; Vygotsky, 1978).

Applying social constructivist principles to assessment in Puranga Town Council could lead to improved academic performance by creating a more engaging and student-centered learning environment. Teachers should be encouraged to use assessment techniques that provide continuous feedback and allow for self-reflection. By doing so, pupils will develop stronger problem-solving skills and a greater motivation to learn, ultimately leading to better performance in national examinations and beyond (Piaget, 1950; Vygotsky, 1978).

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

Academic performance refers to the degree to which a student has achieved their educational goals, typically measured through various metrics such as grades, test scores, and overall engagement in academic activities. According to York, Gibson, and Rankin (2015), academic performance is a multidimensional concept that includes cognitive, behavioral, and emotional components. These scholars emphasize that academic performance is not limited to grades but also involves students' engagement in learning activities, persistence in academic tasks, and their emotional attitude towards learning.

In a similar vein, Hattie (2018) defines academic performance as the outcome of education, focusing on how well students, teachers, and educational institutions achieve their learning objectives. He highlights that academic performance encompasses more than just knowledge acquisition it includes the application of skills in practical settings. According to Hattie, academic performance should be measured through both standardized tests and formative assessments, ensuring that the evaluation reflects students' abilities to use their knowledge in real-world scenarios.

Zimmerman (2020) also contributes to the understanding of academic performance by framing it as a reflection of both individual abilities and external factors, such as the quality of instruction and the learning environment. Zimmerman emphasizes the importance of self-regulated learning, where students actively manage their learning processes, set goals, and monitor their progress. According to this view, academic performance is not only the result of instruction but also of students' ability to take ownership of their learning and adapt their strategies as needed.

Assessment methods refer to the tools and techniques used to evaluate the learning progress and academic performance of students. Black and Wiliam (2018) define assessment methods as the systematic collection of information to improve student learning. They stress that assessment should not only be seen as a way to measure student achievement but also as a feedback mechanism that can enhance the learning process. Black and Williams emphasize the importance of formative assessment, where continuous feedback is provided to students, helping them improve before the final evaluation.

Brown (2019) defines assessment methods as the diverse tools and processes used to gather information about students' learning. According to Brown, assessment can be summative, where the focus is on evaluating student performance at the end of a learning cycle, or formative, where the goal is to monitor progress throughout the learning process. Both types of assessments play critical roles in shaping student outcomes, with summative assessments providing a final measure of achievement and formative assessments guiding instructional adjustments and student learning. In this study, assessment methods will be measured using normative assessments, summative assessments, and continuous assessments.

1.1.4 Contextual Background

Academic performance of pupils in Uganda is influenced by several factors including assessment methods, learning environment, parental involvement, peer influence, and teacher competence. Nabasitu Dorothy (2019) explains that assessment practices greatly influence pupils' understanding and retention of knowledge, while Kayizi and Ongodia (2020) observe that school conditions and teacher effectiveness determine learners' academic outcomes. In government-aided primary schools, formative and summative assessments are commonly used to evaluate pupils' learning progress. Formative assessment involves class exercises, oral questions, tests,

and teacher feedback whereas summative assessment mainly includes end-of-term examinations and the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE). However, the effectiveness of these assessment methods is influenced by intervening variables such as learning environment, parental involvement, and peer influence which shape pupils' academic performance.

The learning environment plays a significant role in influencing academic performance in government-aided primary schools. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (2020), a conducive learning environment with adequate classrooms, desks, textbooks, and sanitation facilities improves pupils' concentration and participation in learning activities. However, many schools in Pader District experience overcrowded classrooms, limited instructional materials, and poor infrastructure which negatively affect implementation of effective assessment methods. Uganda National Examinations Board (2021) reported that Pader District has consistently registered lower Primary Leaving Examination performance compared to urban districts partly due to inadequate learning facilities and limited educational resources.

Parental involvement is another important intervening variable affecting pupils' academic performance. The Ministry of Education and Sports (2020) states that parents who monitor homework, provide scholastic materials, and encourage learning positively contribute to pupils' academic success. However, parental involvement in many rural areas such as Puranga Town Council remains limited because of poverty, low literacy levels, and lack of awareness regarding the importance of education. Peer influence also affects academic performance because pupils who participate in group discussions and academic competition tend to perform better than those influenced by indiscipline and poor study habits. Uwezo (2018) found that positive peer interaction improves pupils' motivation and learning outcomes in primary schools.

In Puranga Town Council, teachers commonly use weekly tests, end-of-term examinations, oral assessments, and class exercises to evaluate pupils' learning progress. Black and Wiliam (2018) argue that effective assessment methods supported by continuous feedback improve pupils' understanding and academic performance. Although some schools have introduced formative assessment strategies and competency-based learning approaches, implementation is still limited by large class sizes, inadequate teacher training, and weak feedback mechanisms. Uganda National Examinations Board (2021) noted that schools which introduced regular feedback, peer learning, and continuous assessment strategies reported improved pupil performance in

examinations. This therefore indicates that effective assessment methods together with positive learning environments, parental involvement, and peer influence can improve academic performance in government-aided primary schools.

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1.2 Problem Statement

In an ideal scenario, government-aided primary schools in Uganda would consistently yield high academic performance, demonstrated by robust pass rates in the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE). However, many schools, particularly those in rural areas, continue to struggle with chronic underperformance. Nationally, in 2020, only 68.2% of pupils passed the PLE, with a significant number attaining only the minimum pass grades (Uganda National Examinations Board [UNEB], 2021). In Pader District, the situation is even more concerning, with an average PLE pass rate of approximately 62% over the past five years, reflecting the challenges faced by schools in under-resourced communities.

In Puranga Town Council, performance outcomes reveal a significant disparity compared to the district and national averages. Data from UNEB (2021) indicate that only 55% of pupils in Puranga passed the PLE in 2020, highlighting an urgent need for intervention. Several factors contribute to this underperformance, including inadequate teaching resources, large pupil-to-teacher ratios, and a lack of structured assessment methods to track learning progress effectively. Many schools also struggle with limited teacher training on modern assessment techniques, which affects their ability to provide timely and constructive feedback to pupils (Ministry of Education and Sports [MoES], 2021).

Additionally, socioeconomic challenges exacerbate the academic struggles of pupils in Puranga. Many students come from low-income households where parental involvement in education is minimal due to high levels of illiteracy and economic hardship. Furthermore, limited access to early childhood education negatively impacts foundational literacy and numeracy skills, making it difficult for pupils to perform well in primary school (Nakabugo et al., 2019).

Despite interventions such as the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program, which increased primary school enrollment from 3.1 million in 1997 to over 8.7 million by 2020, issues related to quality assessment practices and continuous learning support persist (MoES, 2021). If these gaps

remain unaddressed, students in Puranga Town Council will continue to experience academic struggles, limiting their chances of progressing to secondary education and breaking the cycle of poverty. Therefore, this study seeks to examine how assessment methods influence academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, Pader District, and explore strategies for improving learning outcomes.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study will investigate the influence of Assessment Methods on Academic Performance in Government Aided Primary Schools in Pader District.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- i. To explore assessment practices/methods in Government Aided Primary Schools in Pader district.
- ii. To examine the level of Academic Performance of Government Aided Primary Schools in Pader district.
- iii. To establish the relationship between Assessment Methods and Academic Performance of Government Aided Primary Schools in Pader district.

1.3.2 Research Questions

This study will answer the following research questions:

- i. What is the assessment practices/methods in Government Aided Primary Schools in Pader district?
- ii. What is the level of academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Pader district?
- iii. What is the relationship between assessment methods and academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Pader district?

1.4 Scope of the Study

1.4.1 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in Puranga Town Council, located in Pader District, Uganda. Pader District comprised 13 sub-counties, including Acholibur, Angagura, Atanga, Awere, Kilak, Laguti, Lapul, Latanya, Ogom, Pader, Pader Town Council (TC), Pajule, and Puranga. However, for this research, the geographical focus was solely on Puranga Town Council. Puranga is a rural area where government-aided primary schools faced distinct challenges related to educational quality and pupil performance. By narrowing the study to this sub-county, the research provided a detailed and localized understanding of assessment practices and academic performance within this particular region of Pader District.

1.4.2 Content Scope

The content scope of the study focused on three main areas within the context of government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council. First, the research explored the assessment methods used in these schools. This included an investigation into the types of assessment practices employed by teachers whether formative, summative, or a combination—and how these were implemented in classroom instruction. The study also examined the challenges teachers faced in applying effective assessment techniques.

Second, the study examined the level of academic performance in the selected schools. This involved an analysis of pupil achievement, including their performance on critical assessments such as the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE). By analyzing performance data from the recent years, the research identified trends and patterns in student outcomes and how these were influenced by various educational factors.

Lastly, the study assessed the relationship between assessment methods and academic performance. This was the core of the investigation, aimed at determining whether certain assessment strategies contributed more effectively to improved learner outcomes. The study sought to uncover correlations between assessment approaches and pupils' academic success or struggles, offering insights into the instructional value of different assessment techniques.

1.4.3 Time Scope

The time scope of the study covered the period from 2020 to 2024. This timeframe was selected to provide insight into recent trends and developments in assessment practices and academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council. It captured a period marked by increased educational focus on improving teaching quality and enhancing assessment strategies, including initiatives by the Ministry of Education and Sports to promote continuous assessment and address disparities in learning outcomes. The selected timeframe was therefore essential for evaluating the impact of recent interventions and educational policies on both teaching practices and pupil performance.

1.5 Significance of The Study

The findings of this study were of great significance to various stakeholders involved in the education sector in Uganda, particularly in Puranga Town Council, Pader District. For policymakers, the study provided crucial data on the effectiveness of existing assessment practices in government-aided primary schools. Understanding the relationship between assessment methods and academic performance enabled policymakers to identify areas for improvement and design targeted interventions aimed at enhancing the quality of education. By offering evidence on what was effective and what was not, the study helped shape future educational reforms focused on improving student outcomes and overall educational standards across the district.

For educators, including teachers and school administrators, the study offered valuable insights into the impact of various assessment practices on student academic performance. Teachers used the findings to evaluate and refine their teaching and assessment strategies, ensuring the adoption of more effective methods to foster improved learning outcomes. Furthermore, the results of the study informed teacher training programs, equipping educators with practical tools to implement best practices in assessment and enhance student learning. School administrators also benefited by gaining a better understanding of how assessment practices influenced academic performance, which informed their decisions on resource allocation, training, and curriculum planning.

Parents and guardians found the study significant as it highlighted key factors influencing their children's academic success. By understanding the role of assessment methods in either

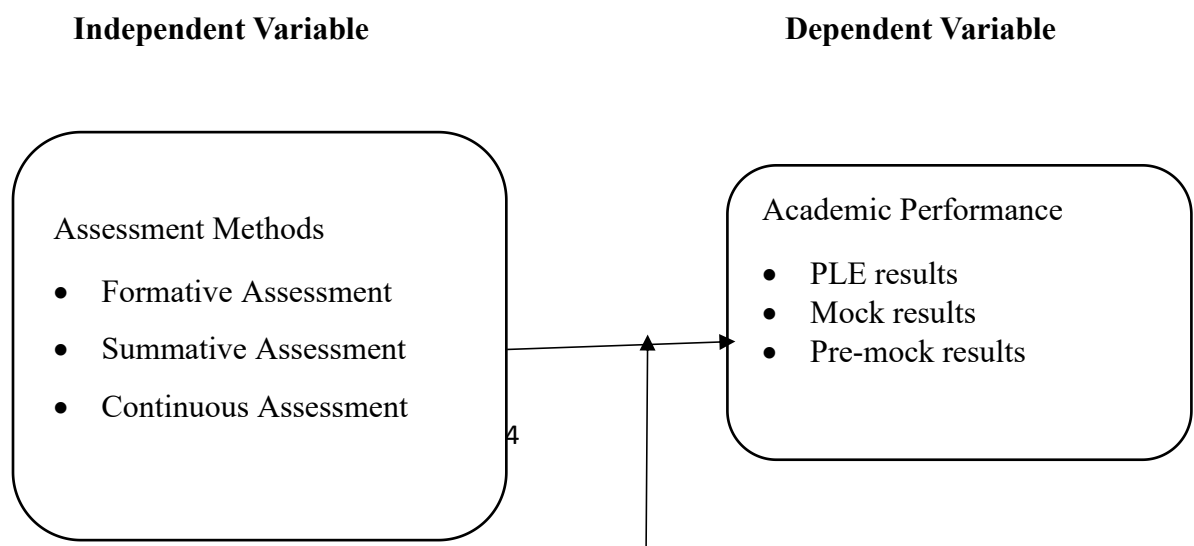
enhancing or hindering academic performance, parents were better positioned to support their children's educational journey. The study also encouraged greater parental involvement in education by raising awareness of the importance of quality assessments and their impact on long-term academic outcomes. Improvements in government-aided primary schools ultimately benefited students by increasing their chances of transitioning to secondary school and accessing better educational opportunities.

Local government officials, particularly those overseeing education, found the study useful in assessing the performance of primary schools within Puranga Town Council. The findings served as a basis for more effective resource allocation, strategic planning to address underperformance, and advocacy for district-level educational reforms. Additionally, the local government's role in monitoring and improving educational quality was strengthened through the evidence provided, enabling the implementation of more targeted and efficient educational programs.

Finally, for future researchers and academics, the study contributed to the growing body of knowledge regarding the impact of assessment methods on academic performance in rural Ugandan settings. It laid a foundation for further research aimed at improving educational practices and outcomes in government-aided primary schools. Scholars and educators could build on this research to explore additional variables influencing academic performance and test the applicability of the findings in other regions of Uganda. Therefore, the study held considerable potential to guide ongoing academic inquiry into education quality in the country.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework showing relationship between Assessment Methods and Academic Performance in Government Aided Primary Schools.



Intervening Variables

- Learning environment
- Parental Involvement
- Peer Influence

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework. Source: Social Constructivist theory(Vygotsky,1978)

Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between assessment methods and academic performance in government-aided primary schools. The framework identifies assessment methods as the independent variable, encompassing performance-based, portfolio, formative, and summative assessments. These methods are posited to influence the dependent variable, academic performance, which is measured through Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE), mock exams, pre-mock exams, and classroom tests. The framework also acknowledges the role of intervening variables, such as the learning environment, parental involvement, and peer influence, which may affect the extent to which assessment methods impact academic performance.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth review of the literature related to assessment methods and academic performance in government-aided primary schools. The literature review is structured to cover theoretical frameworks, various assessment methods, and their impact on academic performance. It also identifies gaps in the current research that the study aims to address.

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Bloom's Taxonomy Theory

Bloom's Taxonomy was introduced by Benjamin Bloom in 1956 to provide a framework for categorizing educational objectives and cognitive skills. The theory classifies learning into six levels namely remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The revised taxonomy by Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl in 2001 further refined the categories to align with modern educational practices. According to Bloom (1956) and Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), effective assessment should evaluate both lower-order and higher-order thinking skills among learners.

The theory assumes that learning progresses from simple cognitive skills such as remembering and understanding to complex skills such as evaluation and creation. Bloom's Taxonomy therefore emphasizes that assessment methods should not only focus on memorization but should also measure learners' ability to apply knowledge, solve problems, and think critically. In many

government-aided primary schools, assessment methods mainly emphasize recall of information through examinations and tests, limiting development of higher-order thinking skills among pupils.

A major strength of Bloom's Taxonomy is that it guides teachers in designing balanced assessment methods that evaluate different cognitive abilities. The theory is relevant to this study because it helps explain how formative, summative, and continuous assessments can improve academic performance when they are designed to measure understanding, application, analysis, and creativity among pupils. The theory therefore provides a foundation for examining how assessment methods influence academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Pader District.

2.1.2 Application of Bloom's Taxonomy to Assessment Methods

Bloom's Taxonomy can be applied in government-aided primary schools through the use of assessment methods that measure different cognitive skills among pupils. According to Bloom (1956), teachers should use assessment techniques such as oral questions, essays, projects, quizzes, and problem-solving activities to assess learners' understanding beyond memorization. This encourages pupils to think critically and actively participate in the learning process.

The theory further supports formative assessment because regular feedback enables teachers to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses during the learning process. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) argue that assessments based on Bloom's Taxonomy improve learners' ability to analyze, evaluate, and apply knowledge in real-life situations. In Puranga Town Council, integrating Bloom's Taxonomy into assessment methods can help improve academic performance by encouraging deeper understanding and active learning among pupils.

Bloom's Taxonomy is also relevant to summative and continuous assessment because it promotes comprehensive evaluation of pupils' learning outcomes. Teachers who design assessments based on different cognitive levels can effectively measure pupils' progress and provide meaningful feedback for improvement. Therefore, application of Bloom's Taxonomy in government-aided primary schools can improve teaching effectiveness, learners' engagement, and academic performance among pupils in Pader District.

2.2 Assessment methods in Government Aided Primary Schools.

Various assessment methods are employed in primary education to gauge student learning and academic performance. Each method has its own implications for how student abilities are evaluated and improved.

2.2.1 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment refers to assessment practices conducted during the learning process to improve learners' understanding and instructional effectiveness. Black and Wiliam (2020) explain that formative assessment involves continuous monitoring of learners through quizzes, classroom discussions, observations, and teacher feedback. Heritage (2021) adds that formative assessment helps teachers identify learning gaps and provide corrective guidance to learners. However, most studies on formative assessment have been conducted in developed countries, creating a geographical gap because little research has focused on government-aided primary schools in rural districts such as Pader District in Uganda.

Research by Hattie and Timperley (2019) established that formative assessment improves learners' engagement, motivation, and academic achievement through continuous feedback. The studies further revealed that learners perform better when teachers provide regular guidance and opportunities for self-reflection. Despite these findings, many previous studies concentrated on secondary schools and higher institutions of learning, leaving a contextual gap regarding formative assessment practices in primary schools in Uganda.

Black and Wiliam (2020) argue that formative assessment supports differentiated instruction because teachers adjust teaching methods according to learners' needs. Through class exercises, oral questions, and assignments, teachers can identify weak learners and provide support. However, most studies focused on the benefits of formative assessment without examining challenges affecting its implementation in rural government-aided primary schools such as inadequate teaching materials and overcrowded classrooms.

Studies by Heritage (2021) show that formative assessment promotes active learner participation and critical thinking. Learners become more engaged in classroom activities because they receive immediate feedback about their performance. Nevertheless, limited studies have

examined how formative assessment influences pupils' academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, creating a geographical and empirical gap in the literature.

Research further indicates that formative assessment improves teacher effectiveness by enabling teachers to monitor learners' progress continuously. Hattie and Timperley (2019) observed that teachers who regularly assess learners can identify weaknesses early and make necessary instructional adjustments. However, most previous studies focused on urban schools where resources and teacher training opportunities are better compared to rural schools in northern Uganda.

Although formative assessment has been associated with improved academic performance, implementation remains a challenge in many government-aided schools. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (2020), many rural schools lack adequate instructional materials, trained teachers, and effective feedback mechanisms necessary for successful formative assessment. Existing studies have not adequately examined how these challenges affect academic performance in primary schools in Pader District.

Therefore, despite the available literature on formative assessment, there is still limited empirical information regarding how formative assessment influences academic performance of pupils in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, Pader District. This study therefore seeks to fill the geographical, contextual, and empirical gaps identified in previous studies.

2.2.2 Summative Assessment

Summative assessment refers to evaluation conducted at the end of an instructional period to measure learners' achievement and academic performance. Guskey and Hargreaves (2021) explain that summative assessment commonly includes final examinations, standardized tests, projects, and assignments used for grading and certification. Mertler (2021) states that summative assessment helps determine whether educational objectives have been achieved. However, most studies on summative assessment have focused on developed countries and urban educational settings, creating a geographical gap regarding rural government-aided schools in Uganda.

Research indicates that summative assessment provides a comprehensive evaluation of learners' performance and helps teachers, parents, and policymakers monitor educational progress. Guskey and Hargreaves (2021) found that examinations and tests provide measurable indicators of learners' academic achievement. Despite these findings, many studies focused on secondary schools and universities, creating a contextual gap because limited attention has been given to primary schools in rural districts such as Pader.

Mertler (2021) observed that summative assessment supports accountability in education because learners' performance can easily be compared across schools and regions. In Uganda, national examinations such as the Primary Leaving Examination are used to determine pupils' academic achievement and transition to secondary education. However, existing studies have not adequately examined how reliance on examinations affects pupils' learning experiences and academic performance in government-aided primary schools.

Research further shows that summative assessment mainly focuses on measuring knowledge retention rather than continuous improvement of learning. Mertler (2021) argues that examinations provide limited feedback to learners and teachers, reducing opportunities for improvement before final evaluation. However, little research has been conducted on how inadequate feedback from summative assessment affects academic performance in primary schools in northern Uganda.

Studies also indicate that over-reliance on summative assessment encourages memorization rather than critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Guskey and Hargreaves (2021) explain that learners often focus on passing examinations instead of understanding concepts deeply. Nevertheless, previous studies have not adequately explored how examination-oriented assessment practices influence pupils' academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council.

In many rural schools, implementation of summative assessment is affected by inadequate instructional materials, overcrowded classrooms, and poor teacher preparation. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (2021), these challenges negatively affect the quality of assessment and learners' performance in examinations. However, limited studies have specifically examined how these challenges affect summative assessment practices in Pader District.

Therefore, despite existing literature on summative assessment, there is still limited empirical evidence regarding how summative assessment influences academic performance of pupils in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, Pader District. This study therefore seeks to address the contextual, geographical, and empirical gaps identified in the literature.

2.2.3 Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment refers to a comprehensive evaluation approach that monitors learners' progress over a period of time through tests, assignments, projects, presentations, and classroom participation. O'Malley and Valdez Pierce (2020) explain that continuous assessment provides ongoing feedback which helps improve teaching and learning processes. Gardner (2021) adds that continuous assessment supports adaptive teaching because teachers can identify learners' weaknesses and provide timely interventions. However, most studies on continuous assessment have focused on developed countries, creating a geographical gap regarding rural schools in Uganda.

Research by Tanner and Jones (2020) established that continuous assessment reduces stress associated with final examinations because learners are evaluated progressively throughout the learning process. Hattie (2019) further found that continuous assessment improves learner motivation and participation because pupils receive regular feedback about their performance. Despite these findings, limited studies have examined continuous assessment practices in government-aided primary schools in Pader District.

Studies also show that continuous assessment promotes learner-centered education by encouraging active participation and self-improvement among learners. Gardner (2021) argues that regular assessment helps learners identify their strengths and weaknesses while improving understanding of classroom content. However, most studies focused on general learner achievement without specifically examining academic performance in government-aided primary schools in rural Uganda.

Continuous assessment also benefits teachers by helping them identify trends in learners' performance and adjust instructional strategies accordingly. Hattie (2019) explains that teachers who regularly monitor learners' progress can provide individualized support and improve

learning outcomes. Nevertheless, limited research has focused on how continuous assessment supports teacher effectiveness in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council.

Despite its advantages, continuous assessment faces challenges such as large class sizes, inadequate instructional materials, and teacher workload. Guskey (2021) notes that continuous assessment requires teachers to spend substantial time collecting, analyzing, and providing feedback on learners' work. However, previous studies have not adequately examined how these challenges affect implementation of continuous assessment in rural government-aided schools in Uganda.

Research further indicates that successful implementation of continuous assessment requires trained teachers, clear assessment criteria, and adequate learning resources. Gardner (2021) emphasizes that teachers must understand assessment techniques and data interpretation for feedback to be effective. However, there is limited empirical evidence regarding availability of these requirements in government-aided primary schools in Pader District.

Therefore, despite the existing literature on continuous assessment, there is still limited empirical information regarding how continuous assessment influences academic performance of pupils in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, Pader District. This study therefore seeks to fill the geographical, contextual, and empirical gaps identified in previous studies.

2.3 Level of Academic Performance in Government Aided Primary Schools.

Academic performance in primary schools is often measured through various assessment tools that reflect students' learning achievements and readiness for further education.

2.3.1 Primary Leaving Examination (PLE)

The Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) is a national examination administered at the end of primary education in Uganda to evaluate pupils' academic achievement and readiness for secondary education. According to Nabunya (2020), the PLE mainly assesses subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, which are considered essential for transition to higher levels of education. The examination serves as a national standard for measuring learning outcomes and determining placement of pupils into secondary schools. In Uganda, performance in the PLE is often used as an indicator of school effectiveness and educational

quality. However, most studies on the PLE have concentrated on national performance trends and urban schools, leaving limited attention to government-aided primary schools in rural districts such as Pader District. This creates a geographical gap because conditions affecting pupils in rural schools differ greatly from those in urban areas.

Research indicates that performance in the PLE greatly influences learners' future educational opportunities and career pathways. Okiror (2022) explains that pupils who perform highly in the examination are more likely to access quality secondary schools with better learning facilities and educational opportunities. On the other hand, poor performance often limits learners to under-resourced schools, affecting future academic and career prospects. This demonstrates the importance attached to PLE performance within Uganda's education system. However, despite recognition of the importance of the examination, limited studies have specifically examined how different assessment methods such as formative, summative, and continuous assessment influence PLE performance among pupils in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, Pader District.

The PLE also serves as an important quality assurance mechanism for Uganda's education system. Nabunya (2020) argues that examination results are used by policymakers, educational planners, and school administrators to evaluate effectiveness of teaching and learning in primary schools. Results from the examination help government identify weak-performing schools and areas requiring educational intervention. In addition, the Uganda National Examinations Board uses examination results to monitor national educational standards and curriculum implementation. However, most previous studies focused on national educational outcomes without adequately examining specific factors affecting PLE performance in rural districts such as Pader. This therefore creates a contextual and empirical gap in the literature.

Despite its importance, the PLE has been criticized for promoting examination-oriented learning and excessive competition among learners. Mugisha (2021) explains that the pressure to perform highly in national examinations often encourages teachers and pupils to focus mainly on memorization and rote learning rather than creativity, innovation, and critical thinking skills. Teachers tend to spend more time drilling pupils with examination questions instead of promoting practical understanding of concepts. This examination-centered approach may limit learners' ability to apply knowledge in real-life situations. However, limited empirical studies

have examined how examination-oriented teaching practices associated with the PLE affect academic performance and overall learning experiences of pupils in government-aided primary schools in Pader District.

Studies further reveal that preparation for the PLE significantly influences teaching methods and classroom practices in primary schools. According to Mugisha (2021), many teachers concentrate heavily on topics that are likely to appear in examinations, while less attention is given to co-curricular activities and practical learning experiences. As a result, the curriculum becomes examination-driven rather than learner-centered. Although this approach may improve short-term examination performance, it may undermine holistic development of learners. However, previous studies have not adequately explored the long-term educational effects of examination-oriented teaching on pupils' academic development and learning outcomes in rural government-aided primary schools in northern Uganda.

Research also indicates that the PLE highlights inequalities among learners from different socio-economic backgrounds. Okiror (2022) explains that pupils from financially stable families often have access to private coaching, textbooks, and supportive home environments that improve examination preparation and performance. In contrast, learners from poor households and rural schools may lack adequate learning materials and academic support. Such inequalities affect performance and access to quality secondary education opportunities. Despite these findings, limited studies have specifically examined how socio-economic inequalities influence PLE performance among pupils in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, creating a geographical and contextual gap in the literature.

As educational systems continue to evolve globally, scholars have recommended introduction of alternative and competency-based assessment approaches to complement national examinations such as the PLE. Nabunya (2020) argues that incorporating formative assessment, project-based learning, and continuous assessment could provide a more comprehensive evaluation of learners' abilities beyond memorization and examination performance. Such approaches may improve critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills among pupils. However, there is still limited empirical research examining how alternative assessment methods can improve PLE performance in government-aided primary schools in rural districts such as Pader District. This

study therefore seeks to fill the geographical, contextual, and empirical gaps identified in previous studies.

2.3.2 Mock Examinations

Mock examinations are practice assessments administered to learners in preparation for final examinations such as the Primary Leaving Examination. According to Sifuna and Oanda (2019), mock examinations are designed to simulate actual examination conditions and help learners become familiar with examination formats, question structures, and time management skills. These examinations are intended to prepare pupils psychologically and academically for high-stakes examinations. In many schools, mock examinations are used to predict learners' likely performance in final examinations and identify weak areas requiring improvement. However, most previous studies on mock examinations have focused on secondary schools and urban institutions, creating a contextual and geographical gap regarding government-aided primary schools in rural districts such as Pader.

Research by Kipkebut (2020) established that mock examinations provide important feedback to both learners and teachers about areas requiring improvement before final examinations. Learners are able to identify weak subjects, improve revision strategies, and gain confidence in answering examination questions. Teachers also use results from mock examinations to revise difficult topics and provide targeted support to struggling learners. These benefits contribute to improved academic preparation and examination readiness among learners. However, despite these findings, limited studies have examined effectiveness of mock examinations in improving academic performance among pupils in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, Pader District.

Studies further indicate that mock examinations improve learners' confidence and ability to manage examination stress. Sifuna and Oanda (2019) explain that repeated exposure to examination conditions helps learners develop effective test-taking strategies and time management skills. Learners become more familiar with examination procedures and therefore approach final examinations with reduced anxiety and increased confidence. Nevertheless, most studies on examination confidence and readiness were conducted in urban and well-resourced

schools, leaving limited evidence regarding pupils in rural government-aided primary schools where educational resources are often inadequate.

Mock examinations also assist teachers in evaluating learners' readiness for final assessments and adjusting instructional approaches accordingly. Kipkebut (2020) notes that teachers can use mock examination results to identify areas where learners are struggling and provide remedial teaching before final examinations. This allows teachers to focus on difficult topics and improve learners' understanding of key concepts. However, previous studies have not adequately explored how teachers in government-aided primary schools utilize mock examination feedback to improve academic performance among pupils in rural districts such as Pader.

Despite their importance, mock examinations have also been criticized for contributing to increased stress and anxiety among learners. Sifuna and Oanda (2019) explain that pressure to perform highly in mock examinations may negatively affect learners' emotional well-being and academic confidence. Some pupils may become discouraged after poor performance in mock examinations, which can negatively influence their preparation for final examinations. However, limited empirical studies have examined psychological effects of mock examinations on pupils in government-aided primary schools in northern Uganda.

Research further indicates that excessive focus on mock examinations may encourage examination-oriented teaching practices. Kipkebut (2020) argues that teachers may concentrate mainly on drilling pupils with past examination questions rather than promoting critical thinking, creativity, and practical understanding of concepts. This approach may improve short-term examination performance but limit broader educational development among learners. Nevertheless, there is limited research examining how examination-oriented teaching associated with mock examinations affects pupils' academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council.

As educational practices continue to evolve, scholars have recommended use of innovative assessment approaches such as digital simulations, formative assessments, and learner-centered evaluation methods to complement mock examinations. Sifuna and Oanda (2019) explain that such innovations may provide a more comprehensive understanding of learners' progress and readiness for final examinations. However, there is still limited empirical research regarding effectiveness of these alternative approaches in improving academic performance in government-

aided primary schools in Pader District. This study therefore seeks to address the contextual, geographical, and empirical gaps identified in previous studies.

2.3.3 Pre-Mock Examinations

Pre-mock examinations are preliminary assessments administered before official mock examinations to determine learners' readiness and identify learning gaps at an early stage. According to Cheema and Sayeed (2020), pre-mock examinations provide learners and teachers with an opportunity to evaluate strengths and weaknesses before entering more formal assessment stages. These examinations help learners become familiar with examination conditions and identify areas requiring additional revision and preparation. In many schools, pre-mock examinations are used as diagnostic tools to guide subsequent teaching and learning activities. However, most studies on pre-mock examinations have concentrated on secondary schools and foreign educational settings, creating a geographical gap regarding government-aided primary schools in rural Uganda.

Research indicates that pre-mock examinations help reduce fear and anxiety associated with final examinations. Kim (2022) found that learners who participate in preliminary assessments become more confident and improve their study habits before sitting official examinations. Early exposure to examination conditions helps learners practice time management and develop effective revision strategies. As a result, learners become psychologically prepared for subsequent assessments. However, despite these findings, limited studies have examined how pre-mock examinations influence academic performance among pupils in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, Pader District.

Studies also reveal that pre-mock examinations assist teachers in identifying areas where learners require additional support before official mock examinations. Cheema and Sayeed (2020) explain that teachers use results from pre-mock examinations to revise difficult topics, provide remedial lessons, and improve instructional strategies. This formative use of assessment results helps improve learners' readiness for future examinations. Nevertheless, previous studies have not adequately examined how teachers in rural government-aided primary schools use pre-mock examination results to improve pupils' academic performance.

Pre-mock examinations further help learners develop important examination skills such as question interpretation, revision planning, and time management. Kim (2022) explains that learners who participate in regular practice assessments are more likely to perform better in official examinations because they become more familiar with examination expectations. In addition, learners can identify weak areas early and allocate more time to difficult subjects. However, most studies on examination preparation focused on urban schools and well-resourced institutions, leaving limited evidence regarding rural government-aided primary schools in northern Uganda.

Despite their benefits, pre-mock examinations also face several challenges. Cheema and Sayeed (2020) note that poorly designed pre-mock examinations may fail to reflect actual examination standards and therefore provide misleading feedback to learners and teachers. In addition, inadequate teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms, and limited teacher support may affect effective administration of pre-mock examinations in rural schools. However, these implementation challenges have not been adequately examined in relation to government-aided primary schools in Pader District.

Research further indicates that pre-mock examinations can influence learners' motivation and engagement in different ways. Some learners become more committed to their studies after identifying weak areas through preliminary assessments, while others may become discouraged by poor performance. Kim (2022) argues that guidance and counseling services are important in helping learners interpret examination results positively and remain motivated. However, limited empirical studies have explored psychological effects of pre-mock examinations on pupils in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council.

As educational assessment practices continue to evolve, scholars have proposed integration of digital assessment tools, adaptive testing, and continuous formative feedback into pre-mock examination systems. Cheema and Sayeed (2020) explain that innovative assessment methods may improve learners' preparation, confidence, and academic performance. Such approaches may also provide more accurate information regarding learners' strengths and weaknesses. However, there is still limited empirical research regarding effectiveness of these innovative approaches in government-aided primary schools in Pader District. This study therefore seeks to fill the geographical, contextual, and empirical gaps identified in the literature.

2.3 Relationship Between Assessment Methods and Academic Performance of Government-Aided Primary Schools.

The relationship between assessment methods and academic performance is a critical area of study in educational research. Assessment methods encompass various tools and approaches used to evaluate students' knowledge, skills, and abilities. These methods include formative assessments, summative assessments, and performance-based assessments, among others (Black & Wiliam, 2020). Academic performance, often measured through test scores, grades, and other academic indicators, reflects students' understanding and mastery of the curriculum. Understanding how different assessment methods influence academic performance can provide valuable insights into improving educational outcomes in government-aided primary schools.

Formative assessment refers to a range of assessment activities conducted during the learning process to provide ongoing feedback to students and educators. Research indicates that formative assessments have a positive impact on academic performance by enabling timely interventions and adjustments to teaching strategies (Wiliam, 2021). For example, formative assessments such as quizzes, class discussions, and peer reviews help identify areas where students are struggling and allow teachers to modify instruction accordingly. Studies have shown that students who receive regular, constructive feedback through formative assessments tend to achieve higher academic performance compared to those who do not (Hattie & Timperley, 2020).

Summative assessment is used to evaluate students' learning at the end of an instructional period, often contributing to final grades or certification (Popham, 2019). Examples include end-of-term exams, standardized tests, and final projects. The relationship between summative assessments and academic performance is straightforward, as these assessments are designed to measure the extent of students' knowledge and skills. Research has demonstrated that summative assessments can be effective in providing a comprehensive measure of academic achievement and setting benchmarks for performance (Jansen, 2022). However, the effectiveness of summative assessments in improving academic outcomes depends on their alignment with instructional goals and their ability to provide meaningful feedback.

Performance-based assessment requires students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through practical tasks, such as projects, presentations, and real-world problem-solving activities

(Brown, 2021). This method of assessment emphasizes the application of learning in authentic contexts. Research suggests that performance-based assessments can enhance academic performance by engaging students in higher-order thinking and promoting deeper learning (Ravitz, 2020). These assessments often provide a more holistic view of student abilities and can foster critical thinking and creativity. However, their effectiveness may vary based on the quality of task design and the extent to which assessments align with curriculum standards.

Portfolio assessment involves the collection of students' work over time, showcasing their progress and achievements (Boud, 2021). Portfolios can include a variety of artifacts, such as assignments, projects, and reflections. The use of portfolios as an assessment method has been linked to improved academic performance by allowing students to take ownership of their learning and reflect on their growth (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2020). Portfolios provide a comprehensive view of student learning and can help educators assess not only the final outcomes but also the learning process. Research indicates that portfolios can enhance student engagement and motivation, leading to better academic performance.

While various assessment methods can positively influence academic performance, there are challenges and considerations to address. For instance, the validity and reliability of assessments are crucial for ensuring accurate measurement of student learning (Stiggins, 2021). Additionally, the implementation of diverse assessment methods requires adequate training for educators and appropriate resources (Harlen, 2019). The effectiveness of assessment methods can also be affected by factors such as students' prior knowledge, learning styles, and the educational context (Sadler, 2020). Therefore, a balanced approach that considers these factors is essential for optimizing the relationship between assessment methods and academic performance.

Future research should focus on exploring how different assessment methods can be integrated to enhance academic performance effectively. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into the long-term impact of various assessment approaches on student achievement (Carless, 2021). Additionally, examining the role of technology in assessment practices and its effects on academic performance could offer new perspectives on improving assessment strategies (Bennett, 2020). The findings from such research can inform policy and practice in government-aided primary schools, leading to more effective assessment methods and improved educational outcomes.

2.4 Information Gaps

Despite the wealth of research on assessment methods and academic performance, there are still notable information gaps. For instance, there is limited research on the specific impact of assessment methods on performance in government-aided primary schools in rural areas. Additionally, more studies are needed to explore how different assessment strategies interact with local educational contexts and resources. Addressing these gaps can provide more nuanced insights into the effectiveness of various assessment methods and their implications for student learning and achievement in specific settings.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

Research methodology provided legitimacy to the study by ensuring scientifically sound findings and offering a detailed plan that kept the researcher on track to achieve long-standing objectives, answer research questions, and test relevant hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2020). This chapter therefore presented the research approach, research design, study population, sample size determination, sample selection, data collection methods, data collection tools, quality control, administration procedures, ethical considerations, and data analysis techniques used in the study.

3.1 Research Approach

The study adopted a mixed methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach was based on the understanding that the complexities of the research problem could not be sufficiently captured by a single method alone (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative methods were used to describe phenomena numerically, providing objectivity in the data collection and statistical analysis (Cohen et al., 2019). Quantitative data enabled the study to examine factual patterns and test relationships among variables using structured tools like questionnaires. On the other hand, the qualitative approach offered an in-depth understanding of

participants' experiences, beliefs, and perceptions (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). It involved gathering detailed insights through interviews, allowing participants to express their views about educational assessment and performance in their own words (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The use of the mixed method approach facilitated triangulation, which enhanced the validity and reliability of findings. It also enabled the researcher to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the research objectives by integrating numerical evidence with rich descriptive data (Saunders et al., 2020).

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a concurrent (convergent) mixed method research design, which involved collecting both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time (Creswell, 2014). This design was appropriate for the study because it allowed the researcher to simultaneously gather data using structured questionnaires from teachers and pupils, while also conducting interviews with Head Teachers and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members. The concurrent design enabled efficient comparison and integration of data from different sources, ultimately allowing for triangulation of findings.

3.3 Study Population

The study population comprised all Head Teachers (04), Teachers (80), Students (2000), PTA members (40), and Directors of Studies (04) from government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, Pader District. These categories were selected because they held relevant information about assessment practices and student performance. Teachers and students were involved in the teaching and learning process, while Head Teachers and Directors of Studies oversaw school operations and curriculum implementation. PTA members were included to represent community involvement and parental perspectives on school performance and assessment methods.

3.4 Sample Size Determination

The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of sample size determination. This method was selected because it is widely accepted and provides statistically justified sample sizes based on a known population. Given the large number of students, teachers, and PTA members in the study population, the Krejcie and Morgan table helped the researcher

identify a manageable and representative sample size without compromising the validity or generalizability of the finding (Morgan & Krejcie, 1970).

Table 1: Sampling Frame

Category	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Procedure
Schools	7	7	Purposive
Learners	2,000	140	Simple Random
Teachers	80	30	Simple Random
Head Teachers	7	7	Purposive
District Education Officials	2	2	Purposive
DOS	1	1	Purposive
PTA Members	6	6	Purposive
TOTAL	2,103	200	

Source: Primary Data.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

The study employed both probability and non-probability sampling techniques, in alignment with the mixed methods research approach. For the probability sampling technique, the simple random sampling method specifically the lottery method was applied (Creswell, 2014). In this method, participants were assigned identification codes, which were written on separate pieces of paper and placed into a box. The researcher then thoroughly shook the box to ensure equal chances of selection for all participants before randomly picking the required number of samples. This method was used particularly for selecting teachers and students, given the large population sizes in these categories. The strength of this method lay in its fairness and ability to produce a representative sample, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the study's findings.

On the other hand, the non-probability sampling method used was judgmental or purposive sampling. This approach was applied to select head teachers and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members. These groups were deliberately chosen based on the researchers' judgment that they possessed expert knowledge and relevant experience regarding assessment methods and academic performance in government-aided primary schools (Neuman, 2014). The use of

judgmental sampling ensured that critical insights were gathered from informed individuals, strengthening the depth and contextual relevance of the qualitative findings.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources to enrich the findings. Primary data were obtained through questionnaires and key informant interviews, while secondary data were extracted through document analysis.

3.6.1 Questionnaire Survey/Questionnaires

These refer to self-reporting method of data collection, where respondents provide answers to a set of questions, often in a structured or semi structured format(Creswell,2014). It was used to enable the researcher reach out to all the sample population(Creswell,2014). This involved distributing self-administered, closed-ended questionnaires to teachers and learners in government-aided primary schools. The questionnaires were structured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The survey process was facilitated either by the researcher or trained research assistants. This method was chosen for its efficiency in gathering standardized responses from a large number of participants, allowing for numerical analysis of assessment methods and their relationship with academic performance (Creswell, 2014).

3.6.2 Interview

Interview refers to a way of qualitative data collection in which a researcher engages the participants in a conversation using open ended questions to encourage detailed and nuanced responses (Creswell,2014). Interviews were conducted with head teachers and PTA members, specifically targeting their experiences and opinions on assessment methods and pupil's academic performance. A pre-planned interview schedule was used after appointments had been arranged with respondents. This method proved effective in eliciting rich, in-depth information from experienced stakeholders such as head teachers, Directors of Studies (DOS), and heads of departments in primary schools (Neuman, 2014).

3.7 Data collection instruments

3.7.1 Questionnaires

These refer to self-reporting method of data collection, where respondents provide answers to a set of questions, often in a structured or semi structured format (Creswell,2014). It was used to enable the researcher reach out to all the sample population (Creswell,2014). This involved distributing self-administered, closed-ended questionnaires to teachers and learners in government-aided primary schools.

3.7.2 Interview

Interview refers to a way of qualitative data collection in which a researcher engages the participants in a conversation using open ended questions to encourage detailed and nuanced responses (Creswell,2014).

3.8 Quality Control

To ensure the quality of data collection tools, all instruments were piloted before actual fieldwork commenced. Pre-testing was conducted with randomly selected respondents from one school in Gulu City. The pilot test allowed the researcher to identify and revise ambiguous or unclear questions. Furthermore, interview questions were reviewed in peer discussion sessions to ensure clarity and relevance.

3.8.1 Validity

Validity was prioritized to ensure that the instruments measured exactly what they were intended to measure (Amin, 2005; Kahn, 1986). The self-designed questionnaires and interview guides were pre-tested with a group of students. The researcher used this opportunity to assess the clarity, wording, and logical flow of the items. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was then computed, and only tools with a score of 0.70 or higher were deemed acceptable and valid for use.

Reliability, the consistency of the measurement tools, was also tested (Neuman, 2014). The study aimed for a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 and above, which is acceptable in educational

research (Amin, 2006). This ensured that the instruments yielded stable and consistent results across multiple instances of data collection.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

According to Creswell (2014), ethical consideration refers to anticipated ethical issues such as informed consent, confidentiality, and potential benefits and harm to participants, that should be considered in a research study. These were strictly observed throughout the study.

Participation was entirely voluntary. The nature and purpose of the study and its importance was thoroughly explained to each participant so they voluntarily participated from an informed point of view without fear of harm.

All participants participated upon seeking their consent prior to engagement with the researcher and research assistants. A consent form clearly outlining the objectives of the study and the intended use of the information was shared and explained to each participant.

Participants personal information and their responses as well as their identities were maintained and kept anonymous to guarantee safety/security for any information disclosed, (Saunders et al. 2015).

The researcher tried as, much as possible to avoid plagiarism in this study by basing on personal analysis other than relying solely on existing sources of information. However, some careful paraphrasing and citations in the APA format were used to enrich the study in consultation with the supervisors.

The researcher ensured that no respondent faced discrimination or stigmatization for any information disclosed during interviews or questionnaire administration. The use of inclusive tools, neutral and culturally respectful words in the instruments eliminated discrimination in this study.

3.9 Administration Procedure

Once the tools had been validated and finalized, the researcher developed a detailed plan of activities for data collection. A letter of introduction was obtained from the Faculty of Education

and Humanities at Gulu University to formally introduce the study to relevant authorities and participants. Research assistants were trained thoroughly on how to administer both questionnaires and key informant interviews to ensure consistency and quality in the data collection process.

3.10 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25.0). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the data and identify trends. Inferential statistics were applied at three levels: univariate, bivariate, and multivariate. At the univariate level, descriptive item analysis was conducted. At the bivariate level, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine relationships between variables. For the multivariate level, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis were performed to address the first and second research questions.

For qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed to identify and report key patterns and themes emerging from the interview responses (Bryman, 2016). This method allowed the researcher to systematically code the data, group similar ideas, and draw interpretations based on the major recurring themes that aligned with the study's objectives.

The quantitative data collected in this study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. Initially, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the data and identify general trends related to assessment methods and academic performance. This descriptive approach provided an overview of the distribution and characteristics of the variables under study. Following this, inferential statistical techniques were applied at three levels to deepen the analysis. At the univariate level, descriptive item analysis was conducted to examine individual variables in detail. At the bivariate level, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to investigate the relationships between different variables, helping to determine whether there were significant differences across groups. Lastly, multivariate analysis was performed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis to explore the strength and nature of relationships among multiple variables simultaneously. These statistical methods were particularly useful for answering the key research

questions concerning the links between assessment practices and academic performance in government-aided primary schools.

Qualitative data, gathered primarily through interviews, were subjected to thematic analysis. This involved a systematic process where interview transcripts were sorted, cleaned, and carefully coded to identify significant patterns and themes. The researcher paraphrased participants' responses to capture their meanings accurately, before categorizing similar ideas into coherent themes. This approach enabled an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences and perceptions regarding assessment methods and academic performance. The thematic analysis complemented the quantitative findings by providing rich, contextual insights that illuminated the reasons behind observed statistical trends.

Specifically, for Research Question 1, which sought to understand the assessment practices employed in government-aided primary schools in Pader district, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the types and frequency of assessment methods reported by teachers and school administrators. This provided a clear picture of common assessment techniques and how they are implemented across schools.

For Research Question 2, which examined the level of academic performance among pupils in these schools, the study analyzed students' scores using descriptive statistics to assess overall performance levels. Further inferential analyses helped to identify any significant differences in academic achievement between different groups or schools.

Finally, Research Question 3, focusing on the relationship between assessment methods and academic performance, was addressed using correlation and multiple regression analysis. These multivariate techniques allowed the researcher to determine the strength and significance of the associations between various assessment practices and student academic outcomes, while controlling for other influencing factors.

Together, the combined use of quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques ensured a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The integration of numerical data with rich qualitative insights strengthened the validity and reliability of the study's conclusions,

providing a robust basis for recommendations aimed at improving assessment practices and academic performance in government-aided primary schools.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study titled "Assessment Methods and Academic Performance of Pupils in Government Aided Primary Schools in Pader District: A Case of Puranga Town Council." The data presented in this section were collected from a sample of 200 respondents out of an initially targeted 400. This represents a response rate of 50%, which was deemed adequate for the purpose of drawing valid conclusions. The sample comprised head teachers, classroom teachers, district education officers, and learners from selected government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council.

The primary aim of this chapter is to present, analyse, and interpret the data gathered through structured questionnaires and interviews. The findings are organized thematically based on the study's research questions, and they are analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. In addition, qualitative data were analysed through thematic interpretation to provide deeper insights into the perceptions and experiences of respondents regarding assessment practices and academic performance.

The analysis in this chapter is structured around the research questions that guided the study. The first objective sought to explore the assessment practices and methods employed in government-aided primary schools within Puranga Town Council. The second research question focused on examining the current level of academic performance among pupils in these schools. Lastly, the third research question aimed at establishing the relationship between assessment methods and the academic performance of pupils. Each of these research questions is addressed in the subsequent sections through a comprehensive presentation and interpretation of the data obtained from the field.

4.0.1 Response Rate; the response rate was 100%

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. Understanding the demographic background of respondents was vital in contextualizing the findings, particularly in relation to their gender, age group, level of education, position, and experience in their respective roles.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics

Item	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender	Male	90	45%
	Female	110	55%
	Total	200	100%
2. Age Group	20–29	50	25%
	30–39	70	35%
	40–49	50	25%
	50 and above	30	15%
	Total	200	100%
3. Highest Level of Education	Certificate	40	20%
	Diploma	115	57.5%
	Bachelor's Degree	10	5%

	Master's Degree	5	2.5%
	Other	30	15%
	Total	200	100%
4. Current Position	Head Teacher	20	10%
	Classroom Teacher	50	25%
	District Education Officer	10	5%
	Learners	120	60%
	Total	200	100%
5. Years in Current Position	Less than 1 year	20	10%
	1–3 years	50	25%
	4–6 years	60	30%
	More than 6 years	70	35%
	Total	200	100%

Primary data, 2025

The study comprised a total of 200 respondents drawn from government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, Pader District. Analysis of the demographic characteristics revealed a fairly balanced gender composition. Out of the total participants, 45% were male and 55% were female. This indicated a slightly higher representation of females in the sample, which may reflect the gender distribution among staff and learners in the area.

Regarding age distribution, the majority of respondents (35%) were between the ages of 30 and 39 years. This was followed by those aged 20–29 and 40–49 years, each comprising 25% of the sample. Respondents aged 50 and above represented the smallest group at 15%. These findings suggested that most participants were within the active professional age range, which is critical for reliable responses concerning academic assessment practices and pupil performance.

In terms of educational qualifications, most respondents (57.5%) held a diploma, while 20% had a certificate. Only 5% of the respondents possessed a bachelor's degree and 2.5% had a master's degree. Notably, 15% reported having other forms of education. The data demonstrated that while the majority of the professional staff had basic to mid-level qualifications, higher academic credentials were less common. This could have implications for the depth of understanding and application of assessment methods among staff.

When categorized by current position, the largest group of respondents were learners, comprising 60% of the sample. Classroom teachers made up 25%, head teachers constituted 10%, and district education officers represented 5%. The inclusion of learners was particularly important in this study as it provided first-hand insight into how assessment methods influenced their

academic experiences and performance. Their contributions added depth and practical relevance to the findings.

Finally, the respondents' work experience in their current positions varied. A significant portion (35%) had worked for more than six years, while 30% had between four to six years of experience. Respondents with one to three years of experience made up 25%, and those with less than one year constituted 10%. This distribution indicated that the study drew on a well-experienced pool of educators and administrators, enhancing the reliability of the information collected regarding assessment methods and their effects on pupil performance.

4.2 Assessment and Methods

This section presents findings on the various assessment methods used in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council.

Table 3: Assessment Methods

Formative Assessment	SD (%)	D (%)	SD+D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	A+SA (%)
Formative assessments provide ongoing feedback to improve pupils' learning	3.6	1.2	4.8	11.4	33.1	50.6	83.7
Formative assessments help identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses	4.5	3.0	7.6	8.1	34.3	50.0	84.3
Formative assessments adjust teaching to better meet pupils' needs	2.5	4.0	6.5	16.5	38.0	39.0	77.0
Formative assessments are integrated regularly into the learning process	2.5	6.5	9.0	13.5	37.0	40.5	77.5

Formative assessments enhance pupils' engagement and participation	1.0	7.5	8.5	16.5	40.0	35.0	75.0
Formative assessments allow personalized learning based on progress	2.0	3.5	5.5	11.5	34.0	49.0	83.0
Formative assessments encourage teacher-student dialogue	4.0	9.5	13.5	22.0	32.0	32.5	64.5
Summative Assessment							
Summative assessments measure overall achievement effectively	1.0	8.0	9.0	14.0	33.5	43.5	77.0
Summative assessments provide benchmarks for performance	4.0	6.5	10.5	17.5	42.5	29.5	72.0
Summative assessments determine pupils' readiness for advancement	3.5	5.0	8.5	20.5	31.5	39.5	71.0
Summative assessments reflect effectiveness of instruction	2.5	7.5	10.0	11.5	31.0	47.5	78.5
Summative assessments align with learning objectives and standards	2.0	6.0	8.0	12.0	28.5	51.5	80.0
Summative assessments track pupil progress over time	1.5	5.1	6.6	17.2	33.8	42.4	76.3
Summative assessments motivate students to perform well in exams	3.5	7.5	11.1	14.6	38.7	35.7	74.4
Continuous Assessment							
Continuous assessments evaluate pupils' progress comprehensively	4.0	7.6	11.6	24.2	43.4	20.7	64.1
Continuous assessments help identify and address learning gaps	5.1	3.0	8.1	27.3	35.4	29.3	64.6
Continuous assessments promote active student reflection	4.0	8.0	12.1	19.6	41.7	26.6	68.3
Continuous assessments are integrated across activities and subjects	1.5	9.0	10.5	23.0	41.0	25.5	66.5
Continuous assessments foster self-assessment and a growth mind-set	1.5	4.5	6.0	22.0	40.5	31.5	72.0
Continuous assessments reduce anxiety through gradual evaluation	3.5	2.0	5.6	25.8	31.8	36.9	68.7
Continuous assessments maintain consistent focus throughout the term	4.1	6.1	10.2	23.9	37.6	28.4	66.0

Primary data, 2025

This section presented findings on the various assessment practices and methods used in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council. The data reflected the perceptions of teachers and stakeholders regarding formative, summative, and continuous assessments.

Formative assessment practices received the highest positive response rates overall. Notably, 84.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that formative assessments helped identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses, while 83.7% indicated that these assessments provided ongoing feedback to improve pupils' learning. Additionally, 83.0% of participants affirmed that formative assessments allowed for personalized learning based on individual progress. A majority also agreed that formative assessments were regularly integrated into the learning process (77.5%), adjusted teaching to better meet pupils' needs (77.0%), and enhanced pupil engagement and participation (75.0%). However, encouraging ongoing dialogue between

teachers and students through formative assessments had a relatively lower positive agreement of 64.5%, with 13.5% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Summative assessments were generally seen as effective tools for evaluating pupils' academic achievement, though with slightly lower positive responses than formative assessments. A substantial 78.5% agreed that summative assessments accurately reflected the effectiveness of instructional practices. Eighty percent of respondents also agreed that summative assessments aligned well with learning objectives and standards, and 77.0% acknowledged that summative assessments effectively measured overall academic achievement. Tracking pupil progress over time was positively viewed by 76.3% of respondents. However, some summative assessment aspects such as motivating students to perform well during exams and providing benchmarks for performance received relatively lower agreement rates of 74.4% and 72.0%, respectively. Disagreement rates ranged from 6.6% to 11.1%, indicating some reservations about the use of summative assessments.

Continuous assessment methods garnered mixed responses, with the lowest agreement percentages compared to formative and summative assessments. Only 64.1% of respondents agreed that continuous assessments provided a comprehensive evaluation of pupils' progress. Similarly, identifying and addressing learning gaps in real-time was supported by 64.6%, while promoting active participation and reflection had slightly higher agreement at 68.3%. Integration of continuous assessments across various learning activities was acknowledged by 66.5%, and maintaining consistent focus throughout the term was agreed upon by 66.0%. On a more positive note, fostering a growth mindset through self-assessment and gradual evaluation to reduce test anxiety received higher agreement rates of 72.0% and 68.7%, respectively. Nonetheless, disagreement with continuous assessment practices was notable, with percentages ranging from 5.6% to 12.1%, reflecting some challenges in the full acceptance or implementation of these methods.

Overall, formative assessments were the most positively perceived practice among teachers in Puranga Town Council, followed by summative assessments, while continuous assessments showed room for improvement in acceptance and integration. These findings suggest that

schools may benefit from reinforcing continuous assessment strategies and fostering better teacher-student dialogue to enhance assessment effectiveness.

4.3 Level of Academic Performance

This section provides an overview of the levels academic performance of pupils as observed in the selected schools.

Table 4: Level of Academic Performance

Statement on Academic Performance	SD (%)	D (%)	SD+D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	A+SA (%)
PLE (Primary Leaving Examination)							
The PLE provides an accurate measure of pupils' overall academic performance	17.5	46.0	63.5	10.5	22.0	4.0	26.0
The PLE effectively determines pupils' readiness for secondary education	14.0	43.5	57.5	9.5	27.5	5.5	33.0
The PLE results reflect the quality of education provided by schools	20.0	38.5	58.5	10.0	26.0	5.5	31.5
The PLE results are a reliable indicator of pupils' long-term academic potential	19.0	42.0	61.0	8.5	26.5	4.0	30.5
The PLE results are influenced by external factors beyond academic performance	15.0	43.0	58.0	9.0	29.5	3.5	33.0

Mock Exams								
Mock exams provide a good indication of pupils' readiness for the PLE	16.5	38.0	54.5	12.5	30.0	3.0	33.0	
Mock exams help identify areas where pupils need improvement before the final exams	14.5	32.5	47.0	17.0	33.5	2.5	36.0	
Mock exams simulate the conditions of the actual PLE effectively	11.5	30.0	41.5	16.0	36.0	6.5	42.5	
Mock exams provide valuable feedback for pupils to enhance their study strategies	8.0	33.5	41.5	16.0	38.0	4.5	42.5	
Mock exams are an accurate predictor of pupils' performance on the PLE	10.0	32.0	42.0	15.0	37.0	6.0	43.0	
Pre-Mock Exams								
Pre-mock exams help in assessing pupils' preparation level before the main mock exams	10.0	36.5	46.5	10.0	36.0	7.5	43.5	
Pre-mock exams provide insights into pupils' strengths and weaknesses	11.0	37.0	48.0	12.0	32.5	7.5	40.0	
Pre-mock exams are useful for adjusting study plans before major examinations	1.0	10.3	11.3	20.0	39.5	29.2	68.7	
Pre-mock exams help reduce exam anxiety by familiarizing pupils with the test format	2.6	6.2	8.7	18.5	37.4	35.4	72.8	
Pre-mock exams are well-aligned with the content and format of the final exams	3.0	9.1	12.1	18.2	43.9	25.8	69.7	
Primary data, 2025								

Pre-mock exams were perceived most positively among the three categories assessed. The statement “Pre-mock exams help reduce exam anxiety by familiarizing pupils with the test format” received the highest level of agreement (A+SA = 72.8%). This suggests that teachers highly appreciated the role of pre-mocks in boosting pupils’ confidence before major assessments. Similarly, many respondents agreed that pre-mock exams were *well-aligned with the content and* format of the final exams (A+SA = 69.7%) and were useful for adjusting study plans before major examinations (A+SA = 68.7%).

In addition, pre-mocks were recognized for their role in providing insights into pupils' strengths and weaknesses (A+SA = 40.0%) and in assessing pupils' preparation levels before the main *mock exams* (A+SA = 43.5%). Although these two had relatively moderate agreement levels, they still outperformed most statements related to the PLE and mock exams.

Perceptions of mock exams were mixed, with moderate levels of agreement overall. The statements “Mock exams provide valuable feedback for pupils to enhance their study strategies” and “*Mock exams simulate the conditions of the actual PLE effectively*” both received equal

levels of agreement (A+SA = 42.5%). Respondents believed that mocks helped prepare pupils for the final exam experience and gave direction for improvement.

Furthermore, mock exams were considered *an accurate predictor of PLE performance* (A+SA = 43.0%) and a *good indicator of readiness for the PLE* (A+SA = 33.0%). The statement “*Mock exams help identify areas where pupils need improvement*” received 36.0% agreement, showing modest support for their diagnostic function. However, all mock-related items still had higher agreement rates than most PLE-related items, indicating better perceived utility than the national exam itself.

The PLE was perceived least favorably among the three assessment types. The highest agreement for any PLE-related statement was “*The PLE effectively determines pupils' readiness for secondary education*” at just 33.0%, closely followed by the belief that *PLE results are influenced by external factors beyond academic performance* (A+SA = 33.0%).

Less than one-third of respondents agreed that *PLE results reflect the quality of education provided by schools* (A+SA = 31.5%) or that they are a *reliable indicator of pupils' long-term academic potential* (A+SA = 30.5%). Only 26.0% agreed that *the PLE provides an accurate measure of pupils' overall academic performance*, while a significant majority (SD+D = 63.5%) disagreed, indicating serious skepticism regarding its effectiveness and fairness.

Questions one: What are the assessment methods in Government Aided Primary Schools in Puranga town council?

Table 5: Results of Standard Deviation Measuring Assessment Methods

Descriptive Statistics on Assessment Method	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Formative Assessment				
Formative assessments provide ongoing feedback to improve pupils' learning	1	5	4.26	0.966
Formative assessments help identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses	1	5	4.22	1.033
Formative assessments are used to adjust teaching methods to better meet pupils' needs	1	5	4.07	0.969
Formative assessments are integrated regularly into the learning process	1	5	4.07	1.013
Formative assessments enhance pupils' engagement and participation	1	5	4.01	0.954
Formative assessments allow for personalized learning based on individual progress	1	5	4.24	0.932
Formative assessments encourage ongoing dialogue between teachers and students	1	5	3.80	1.118

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments effectively measure overall pupils' achievement	1	5	4.10	0.989
Summative assessments provide a clear benchmark for evaluating pupils' performance	1	5	3.87	1.039
Summative assessments are used to determine pupils' readiness for advancement	1	5	3.98	1.058
Summative assessments accurately reflect the effectiveness of instructional practices	1	5	4.13	1.050
Summative assessments are aligned with learning objectives and standards	1	5	4.22	1.007
Summative assessments provide reliable data for tracking pupil progress over time	1	5	4.11	0.963
Summative assessments motivate students to perform at their best during exams	1	5	3.95	1.060

Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessments provide a comprehensive evaluation of pupils' progress	1	5	3.69	1.013
Continuous assessments help teachers identify and address learning gaps in real-time	1	5	3.81	1.054
Continuous assessments promote active participation and reflection from students	1	5	3.79	1.052
Continuous assessments are integrated across various learning activities and subjects	1	5	3.80	0.972
Continuous assessments foster a growth mindset by encouraging regular self-assessment	1	5	3.96	0.923
Continuous assessments reduce test anxiety by evaluating students gradually	1	5	3.96	1.014
Continuous assessments help maintain a consistent focus on learning throughout the term	1	5	3.80	1.048

Average	1	5	3.992381	1.01081
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Primary data, 2025

The study evaluated teachers' perceptions regarding formative, summative, and continuous assessment methods. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The findings are presented with the mean and standard deviation clearly indicated in parentheses.

Formative assessment practices received the highest ratings. The statement "Formative assessments provide ongoing feedback to improve pupils' learning" had the highest score (mean = 4.26, standard deviation = 0.97), indicating that most teachers strongly agreed with its importance. Likewise, "Formative assessments allow for personalized learning based on individual progress" was highly rated (mean = 4.24, standard deviation = 0.93), reflecting strong support for individualized teaching.

Identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses was also viewed positively (mean = 4.22, standard deviation = 1.03). Teachers agreed that formative assessments helped adjust teaching methods

(mean = 4.07, standard deviation = 0.97) and were regularly integrated into the learning process (mean = 4.07, standard deviation = 1.01). Promoting engagement and participation followed closely (mean = 4.01, standard deviation = 0.95). The lowest-rated item in this category was encouraging dialogue between teachers and students (mean = 3.80, standard deviation = 1.12), suggesting variability in practice or emphasis.

Summative assessments were also positively rated. The highest-rated item was that summative assessments align with learning objectives and standards (mean = 4.22, standard deviation = 1.01), followed by their ability to reflect instructional effectiveness (mean = 4.13, standard deviation = 1.05). Tracking pupil progress (mean = 4.11, standard deviation = 0.96) and measuring overall achievement (mean = 4.10, standard deviation = 0.99) were also acknowledged as important roles of summative assessments.

However, teachers showed slightly lower agreement on the ability of summative assessments to determine readiness for advancement (mean = 3.98, standard deviation = 1.06), provide benchmarks (mean = 3.87, standard deviation = 1.04), and motivate pupils to perform well in exams (mean = 3.95, standard deviation = 1.06).

Continuous assessment practices were moderately rated. Teachers valued their role in fostering a growth mind-set (mean = 3.96, standard deviation = 0.92) and reducing test anxiety (mean = 3.96, standard deviation = 1.01). Identifying and addressing learning gaps (mean = 3.81, standard deviation = 1.05), promoting reflection (mean = 3.79, standard deviation = 1.05), and integrating across subjects (mean = 3.80, standard deviation = 0.97) were also acknowledged.

However, continuous assessments were viewed as slightly less comprehensive in evaluating progress (mean = 3.69, standard deviation = 1.01), indicating potential challenges in implementation or perceived effectiveness.

Formative assessments were rated the highest, followed by summative and continuous assessments. The overall average rating across all assessment practices was (mean = 3.99, standard deviation = 1.01). These results suggest that while all assessment methods are valued, formative assessments are most trusted by teachers for improving instruction and learning outcomes in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council. Qualitative Analysis on

Table 6: Qualitative Analysis on Assessment Methods

Respondents	Themes	Quotations
Respondent A (Head Teacher)	Assessment Methods Used: Formative, Continuous, Summative	<i>"We rely on continuous assessment to monitor pupils' progress regularly. It helps us identify who is struggling and what topics need more attention."</i>
	Effectiveness of Assessments	<i>"Formative assessments are very effective because they guide our daily teaching and help us know exactly where a child is struggling."</i>
Respondent B (District Education Official)	Challenges in Implementation	<i>"Large class sizes sometimes limit the effectiveness of these methods."</i>
	Assessment Methods Used: Summative (PLE and Mock Exams)	<i>"The PLE and mock exams are important milestones. The mock exams help pupils get used to the format and timing of the actual PLE."</i>
Respondent C (District Officer of Schools - DOS)	Effectiveness and Limitations	<i>"PLE results sometimes don't reflect true potential because external factors such as exam anxiety and inadequate learning materials affect performance."</i>
	Assessment Methods: Pre-mock, Mock, Continuous	<i>"Pre-mock exams are a recent development aimed at assessing pupils' readiness before the main mock exams."</i>
Respondent D (PTA Member)	Effectiveness of Continuous Assessment	<i>"Continuous assessment offers a clearer picture than one-off exams because it measures development over time."</i>
	Assessment Methods: Peer and Self-Assessment	<i>"Peer and self-assessment are valuable because they build pupils' critical thinking and responsibility for their learning."</i>
Respondent E (Class Teacher)	Effectiveness and Challenges	<i>"When pupils assess their own work, they develop critical thinking and become more confident learners."</i>
	Need for Training	<i>"Without proper guidance and training for both teachers and pupils, the effectiveness of these methods could be limited."</i>
Respondent E (Class Teacher)	Assessment Methods: Formative, Mock Exams	<i>"Formative assessments help us see who needs extra help before the exams."</i>
	Effectiveness and Stress Issues	<i>"Mock exams provide valuable practice but can be stressful if pupils haven't had enough preparation."</i>
Respondent E (Class Teacher)	Need for Balanced Assessment	<i>"A balanced use of assessments supports learning without overwhelming pupils."</i>

Primary data, 2025

Assessment Methods Currently Used in Government-Aided Primary Schools

Respondent A (Head Teacher): The head teacher with six years of experience reported that government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council employ a combination of formative, summative, and continuous assessments. She emphasized the importance of continuous

assessment, explaining that this method is used regularly through class tests, assignments, and oral questioning. She stated, *“We rely on continuous assessment to monitor pupils’ progress regularly. It helps us identify who is struggling and what topics need more attention.”* This approach allows teachers to adapt their teaching methods based on pupils’ ongoing performance rather than waiting for end-of-term exams. She noted, however, that challenges such as large class sizes sometimes limit the effectiveness of these methods.

Respondent B (District Education Official): From the district education perspective, Respondent B confirmed the widespread use of summative assessments, especially the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE), as a key measure of pupils’ academic achievement. He described the PLE as the formal, standardized exam that serves as a culminating assessment after primary education. He further noted that schools administer mock exams to prepare pupils for the PLE. He remarked, *“The PLE and mock exams are important milestones. The mock exams help pupils get used to the format and timing of the actual PLE.”* This official viewpoint underscores the reliance on summative exams to benchmark educational outcomes across schools in the district.

Respondent C (District Officer of Schools - DOS): Respondent C provided insights on the increasing use of pre-mock exams in addition to mock exams, highlighting their role in early identification of learning gaps. He stated, *“Pre-mock exams are a recent development aimed at assessing pupils’ readiness before the main mock exams.”* According to him, these pre-mocks allow teachers to adjust lesson plans and provide additional support where needed. This layered approach of assessments—formative, pre-mock, mock, and PLE—aims to progressively prepare pupils for final exams while also monitoring their development throughout the school year.

Respondent D (PTA Member): The PTA member added another dimension by discussing the involvement of pupils in peer and self-assessment practices. He highlighted that in some schools, pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of their classmates, particularly during group activities. He shared, *“Peer and self-assessment are valuable because they build pupils’ critical thinking and responsibility for their learning.”* This view points to an emerging trend in Puranga Town Council schools to incorporate more participatory and reflective assessment methods, which complement traditional teacher-led assessments.

Respondent E (Class Teacher): From the classroom perspective, Respondent E reinforced the daily use of formative assessments such as quizzes, oral questioning, and class participation. She

emphasized that these ongoing assessments enable teachers to identify and address pupils' learning needs in real-time. She noted, *"Formative assessments help us see who needs extra help before the exams."* This teacher's experience aligns with the head teacher's observations on the importance of continuous monitoring to support pupils' learning progress.

Effectiveness of These Assessment Methods in Measuring Pupils' Understanding and Skills

Respondent A (Head Teacher): The head teacher expressed confidence in the formative and continuous assessments' ability to provide immediate, actionable feedback. She remarked, *"Formative assessments are very effective because they guide our daily teaching and help us know exactly where a child is struggling."* However, she also acknowledged limitations due to large class sizes and resource constraints, which sometimes prevent personalized attention. She pointed out that while these methods are useful, the pressure on teachers and pupils during summative exams remains high.

Respondent B (District Education Official): While recognizing the role of summative assessments like the PLE in standardizing academic achievement measurement, Respondent B raised concerns about their ability to fully capture pupils' abilities. He stated, *"PLE results sometimes don't reflect true potential because external factors such as exam anxiety and inadequate learning materials affect performance."* He emphasized the importance of continuous and formative assessments as complementary methods that provide a more comprehensive understanding of pupils' skills and knowledge over time.

Respondent C (District Officer of Schools - DOS): Respondent C highlighted continuous assessment as a more reliable indicator of pupils' progress, explaining that it allows for tracking growth and addressing learning gaps promptly. He noted, *"Continuous assessment offers a clearer picture than one-off exams because it measures development over time."* This view reflects a preference for a holistic approach to pupil evaluation rather than relying solely on summative test results.

Respondent D (PTA Member): The PTA member stressed the benefits of peer and self-assessment in building pupils' self-awareness and learning autonomy. He said, *"When pupils assess their own work, they develop critical thinking and become more confident learners."*

Nonetheless, he cautioned that without proper guidance and training for both teachers and pupils, the effectiveness of these methods could be limited.

Respondent E (Class Teacher): The class teacher pointed out that while formative assessments boost pupil engagement and motivation, mock exams can create stress, especially when pupils feel unprepared. She stated, “*Mock exams provide valuable practice but can be stressful if pupils haven’t had enough preparation.*” She advocated for a balanced use of assessments that support learning without overwhelming pupils, highlighting the role of feedback in improving study habits and skills.

Summary:

The respondents collectively underscore that a blend of formative, continuous, summative, and emerging peer/self-assessment methods are in use in Puranga Town Council schools. Formative and continuous assessments are praised for their ongoing support of pupils’ learning, while summative exams like the PLE are critical but sometimes seen as limited in fully reflecting pupil ability due to external influences. Peer and self-assessment offer promising benefits but require proper implementation. Challenges such as large class sizes, resource constraints, and exam stress are noted barriers to maximizing the effectiveness of these assessment methods.

Research questions two: What is the level of academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council?

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on Academic Performance

Descriptive Statistics on Academic Performance	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PLE				
The PLE provides an accurate measure of pupils' overall academic performance	1	5	2.49	1.134
The PLE effectively determines pupils' readiness for secondary education	1	5	2.67	1.178
The PLE results reflect the quality of education provided by schools	1	5	2.58	1.225
The PLE results are a reliable indicator of pupils' long-term academic potential	1	5	2.55	1.185

The PLE results are influenced by external factors beyond academic performance	1	5	2.64	1.157
Mock				
Mock exams provide a good indication of pupils' readiness for the PLE	1	5	2.65	1.159
Mock exams help identify areas where pupils need improvement before the final exams	1	5	2.77	1.137
Mock exams simulate the conditions of the actual PLE effectively	1	5	2.96	1.177
Mock exams provide valuable feedback for pupils to enhance their study strategies	1	5	2.98	1.105
Mock exams are an accurate predictor of pupils' performance on the PLE	1	5	2.97	1.156
Pre-mock				
Pre-mock exams help in assessing pupils' preparation level before the main mock exams	1	5	2.95	1.195
Pre-mock exams provide insights into pupils' strengths and weaknesses	1	5	2.88	1.195
Pre-mock exams are useful for adjusting study plans before major examinations	1	5	3.86	0.990
Pre-mock exams help reduce exam anxiety by familiarizing pupils with the test format	1	5	3.97	1.010
Pre-mock exams are well-aligned with the content and format of the final exams	1	5	3.80	1.021
Average			2.92	1.127
Primary data, 2025				

Respondents expressed the highest levels of agreement regarding the effectiveness of pre-mock exams in supporting academic performance. The statement “Pre-mock exams help reduce exam anxiety by familiarizing pupils with the test format” received the highest average rating ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.010$), indicating that pre-mocks were widely seen as reducing stress and increasing pupil readiness. Similarly, “Pre-mock exams are useful for adjusting study plans before major examinations” also received a strong rating ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.990$), followed by “Pre-mock exams are well-aligned with the content and format of the final exams” ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.021$).

These results suggest that pre-mocks were considered the most valuable form of assessment for preparation and planning, with relatively low standard deviations, indicating consistent responses across participants.

Mock exams received moderate ratings in comparison. The highest rated item was “Mock exams provide valuable feedback for pupils to enhance their study strategies” ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 1.105$),

closely followed by “Mock exams are an accurate predictor of pupils’ performance on the PLE” ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 1.156$).

Statements such as “Mock exams simulate the conditions of the actual PLE effectively” ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.177$) and “Mock exams help identify areas where pupils need improvement” ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.137$) also demonstrated moderate levels of agreement. Overall, mock exams were viewed as somewhat useful but not as strongly endorsed as pre-mocks.

Respondents rated the PLE the lowest among all forms of assessment. The lowest-rated item was “The PLE provides an accurate measure of pupils’ overall academic performance” ($M = 2.49$, $SD = 1.134$). Similarly, low scores were recorded for statements such as:

- “The PLE results are a reliable indicator of pupils’ long-term academic potential” ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 1.185$),
- “The PLE results reflect the quality of education provided by schools” ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 1.225$), and
- “The PLE effectively determines pupils’ readiness for secondary education” ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.178$).

Respondents also felt that “The PLE results are influenced by external factors beyond academic performance” ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.157$), suggesting skepticism about the exam’s objectivity and fairness.

The average mean score across all items was ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.127$), reflecting an overall moderate level of agreement with the effectiveness of academic assessments.

Pre-mock exams were rated the most positively, suggesting they play a significant role in preparing students and reducing anxiety.

Mock exams were seen as somewhat effective, particularly in feedback and simulation of exam conditions.

The PLE was viewed critically, with concerns about its reliability, fairness, and effectiveness in measuring academic performance and readiness.

These findings suggest that school-based assessments (pre-mocks and mocks) are perceived as more useful for supporting pupils' learning and performance than high-stakes national assessments like the PLE.

Qualitative Analysis on Academic Performance and Contributing Factors in Government-Aided Primary Schools in Puranga Town Council

Table 8: Qualitative Analysis on Academic Performance

Respondent	Theme	Quotation
Head Teacher (A)	Current Academic Performance	<i>“Many pupils perform well in lower grades, but we see a decline as they advance, especially by Primary 6 and 7.”</i>
District Education Official (B)	Current Academic Performance	<i>“Approximately 40% of pupils meet the minimum competency standards in literacy and numeracy, which is below the national average.”</i>
DOS (C)	Current Academic Performance	<i>“High dropout rates and absenteeism, particularly during rainy seasons when transportation becomes difficult.”</i>
PTA Member (D)	Current Academic Performance	<i>“Akwo kic ma tye man” (“A bird does not fly with one wing”). Success depends on family and community support.”</i>
Class Teacher (E)	Current Academic Performance	<i>“Varied but generally improving. Pupils respond well to encouragement and tailored support.”</i>
Head Teacher (A)	Factors Affecting Performance	<i>“Children who receive encouragement and help with homework tend to perform better.”</i>
District Education Official (B)	Factors Affecting Performance	<i>“Many schools lack adequate classrooms, desks, and learning materials, which affects pupils’ ability to concentrate and learn.”</i>
DOS (C)	Factors Affecting Performance	<i>“Teachers’ skills, attitudes, and workload directly influence learning outcomes.”</i>
PTA Member (D)	Factors Affecting Performance	<i>“In some households, education is valued less because children are expected to contribute to family income or chores.”</i>
Class Teacher (E)	Factors Affecting Performance	<i>“Interactive teaching and frequent assessments help pupils grasp concepts better.”</i>

Primary data, 2025

Respondent A: Head Teacher Regarding the current level of academic performance, the Head Teacher described it as “moderate but with great potential.” He observed, *“Many pupils perform well in lower grades, but we see a decline as they advance, especially by Primary 6 and 7.”* He linked this drop to external factors like farming, where *“some pupils miss important revision sessions because they have to help their families in the gardens, which affects their readiness for the PLE.”* On the factors contributing to performance, he highlighted the crucial role of parental involvement, emphasizing that *“children who receive encouragement and help with homework tend to perform better.”* He gave a local example of community adult literacy classes that indirectly improved pupil performance by enabling parents to better support their children’s education.

Respondent B: District Education Official The District Education Official noted that academic performance in Puranga is mixed, explaining that *“approximately 40% of pupils meet the minimum competency standards in literacy and numeracy, which is below the national average.”* He attributed disparities to resources, noting some schools benefit more from government and community support. For example, he mentioned one school that improved its pass rate by 15% after receiving additional government funding. On factors affecting performance, he stressed infrastructural deficits, saying, *“Many schools lack adequate classrooms, desks, and learning materials, which affects pupils’ ability to concentrate and learn.”* Poverty also plays a big role, forcing some pupils to miss school during planting seasons.

Respondent C: District Officer of Schools (DOS) The DOS took a more critical stance, describing performance as “below expectations given the efforts invested.” He mentioned logistical challenges, including *“high dropout rates and absenteeism, particularly during rainy seasons when transportation becomes difficult.”* For instance, during an inspection, it was reported that over 20% of pupils missed continuous assessments due to travel difficulties. When discussing factors influencing performance, he pointed to teacher quality and workload, stating, *“Teachers’ skills, attitudes, and workload directly influence learning outcomes.”* He also noted that community-led supplementary lessons have positively impacted pupil confidence and performance.

Respondent D: PTA Member the PTA member emphasized socio-cultural influences, saying, *“Akwo kic ma tye man” (“A bird does not fly with one wing”),* to illustrate how pupil success

depends heavily on family and community support. She observed that *“where parents attend school meetings and help with homework, pupils tend to perform better.”* She gave a local example of a mother who used to withdraw her child during planting seasons but changed her mindset after PTA workshops stressed the importance of consistent school attendance. She also highlighted nutrition as a critical factor, sharing, *“Hungry children cannot concentrate, so school feeding programs have been a blessing in our community.”*

Respondent E: Class Teacher:

The Class Teacher reported that academic performance is “varied but generally improving.” She stressed the importance of encouragement and personalized support, sharing an example of a pupil who initially scored poorly but improved after extra tutoring. She also highlighted challenges such as large class sizes and limited teaching materials, saying, *“When you have over 60 pupils, it’s hard to give individual attention.”* She praised peer learning groups introduced locally, citing a shy pupil who gained confidence and improved academically after becoming a peer tutor. She concluded, *“A supportive learning environment combined with community involvement is key to improving performance.”*

4.4 Relationship Between Assessment Methods and Academic Performance

This section examines the link between assessment methods and pupils’ academic performance in the study area.

Research question three: What is the relationship between assessment methods and academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council?

Table 9: Relationship Between Assessment Methods and Academic Performance

Correlations				
Relationship Between Assessment Methods and Academic Performance	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

1. Formative Assessment	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	166			
2. Summative Assessment	Pearson Correlation	.696**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	200	200		
3. Continuous Assessment	Pearson Correlation	.644**	.736**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	200	200	200	
4. Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.787**	.727**	.795**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	200	200	200	200

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

This section explores how various assessment methods namely formative assessment, summative assessment, and continuous assessment relate to pupils' academic performance in government-aided primary schools within Puranga Town Council. The analysis is based on Pearson correlation coefficients, which measure the strength and direction of the relationship between each type of assessment and academic performance. All correlations were found to be statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a high level of confidence in the results.

The correlation between formative assessment and academic performance was found to be strong and positive, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of ($r = .787^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This means that as the use and quality of formative assessments increase, so does pupils' academic performance. Formative assessments include tools such as classroom observations, quizzes, written reflections, group tasks, and ongoing feedback during instruction. These assessments provide immediate insights into pupils' understanding, allowing teachers to tailor instruction to meet learners' individual needs. The strong positive correlation suggests that formative assessments are highly effective in supporting learning and improving performance, as they engage pupils actively and help address learning gaps in real-time.

The relationship between summative assessment and academic performance also revealed a strong and positive correlation ($r = .727^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). Summative assessments typically occur at the end of a learning cycle such as term exams or national assessments like the Primary Leaving

Examination (PLE) and are intended to evaluate cumulative learning outcomes. Although the strength of this relationship was slightly lower compared to the other two assessment types, it remains significant. This suggests that summative assessments still play a valuable role in measuring learning achievement and motivating pupils to perform. However, their ability to influence ongoing learning may be limited compared to formative and continuous assessments.

Among the three types, continuous assessment had the strongest correlation with academic performance, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of ($r = .795^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). Continuous assessment involves the systematic and frequent evaluation of pupils' academic progress throughout the term using various tools and activities. These may include classroom participation, assignments, projects, and short tests across different subjects. The strong correlation indicates that when pupils are consistently monitored and provided with feedback over time, they are more likely to remain engaged and perform well academically. This approach helps both teachers and learners track progress and make timely interventions, which reinforces learning and fosters continuous improvement.

Table 10: Research Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.058 ^a	.003	-.017	10.78804

a. Predictors: (Constant), Continuous Assessment, Summative Assessment, Formative Assessment

(change all tables to APA) pgs 74-76.

The model summary indicates that the combined influence of formative, summative, and continuous assessments on academic performance was very weak. The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.058$) showed a minimal positive relationship between these assessment methods and pupils' academic outcomes. Additionally, the R Square value of 0.003 revealed that only 0.3% of the variation in academic performance could be explained by these three assessment practices together, which is extremely low. The negative adjusted R Square (-0.017) further suggested that the model does not improve prediction beyond simply using the mean academic performance, indicating limited explanatory power when considering all three assessments simultaneously.

This finding contrasts with earlier correlation results that showed strong positive relationships between each assessment method individually and academic performance. The regression model's low predictive value may be due to overlap among the assessment variables or the influence of other important factors not included in the analysis, such as socio-economic status, school resources, or teaching quality. Therefore, while assessment practices are important, this model suggests that they alone cannot fully predict academic performance, and further research should explore additional variables to better understand what drives pupils' success.

Table 11: The ANOVA results

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	58.403	3	19.468	.167	.918 ^b
	Residual	17108.140	147	116.382		
	Total	17166.543	150			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Continuous Assessment, Summative Assessment, Formative Assessment

The ANOVA results show that the regression model predicting academic performance based on formative, summative, and continuous assessments was not statistically significant. With an F-value of 0.167 and a p-value of 0.918, the model failed to demonstrate that the combined assessment methods significantly explain variations in academic performance among pupils. This high p-value indicates that the observed relationship could easily be due to chance, meaning the predictors do not collectively have a meaningful impact on academic outcomes in this sample.

These findings support the earlier model summary results, where the explanatory power of the model was very low ($R^2 = 0.003$). The lack of statistical significance suggests that other factors outside these assessment methods may play a more substantial role in determining academic performance. Consequently, while formative, summative, and continuous assessments are important educational tools, this analysis indicates that they alone are insufficient to predict pupils' academic success, highlighting the need to consider additional variables in future research.

Table 12: The coefficients

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	43.123	4.703		9.170	.000
	Formative Assessment	-.039	.296	-.020	-.130	.896
	Summative Assessment	-.125	.252	-.071	-.497	.620
	Continuous Assessment	.148	.246	.082	.600	.549

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

The coefficients table reveals that none of the assessment methods formative, summative, or continuous had a statistically significant effect on academic performance in this study. The constant term was significant ($B = 43.123$, $p < .001$), indicating the baseline level of academic performance when all assessment scores are zero. However, the individual predictors all had very low standardized coefficients with p-values far above the 0.05 threshold: formative assessment ($\beta = -0.020$, $p = 0.896$), summative assessment ($\beta = -0.071$, $p = 0.620$), and continuous assessment ($\beta = 0.082$, $p = 0.549$). This suggests that none of these assessment practices significantly predicted academic performance when controlling for the others.

These results align with the previous ANOVA and model summary findings, indicating that the assessed methods of evaluation do not independently contribute in a meaningful way to variations in pupils' academic achievement in the study context. The negative coefficients for formative and summative assessments, although not significant, hint at a slight inverse relationship, while continuous assessment showed a positive but non-significant relationship. Overall, the data suggest that other factors beyond these assessment types likely play a stronger role in influencing academic outcomes and should be explored in future studies.

Table 13: Qualitative Analysis on Influence of Assessment Methods and Suggested Improvements

Respondents	Themes	Quotations
Head Teacher (A)	Influence of	<i>"Assessment helps teachers identify weak areas, but sometimes</i>
	Assessment Methods	<i>results don't reflect true potential due to external factors."</i>
	Suggested	<i>"We need more frequent formative assessments and better</i>
District Education Official (B)	Improvements	<i>feedback mechanisms to guide pupils."</i>
	Influence of	<i>"Summative assessments motivate pupils but often cause anxiety,</i>
	Assessment Methods	<i>which affects performance."</i>
DOS (C)	Suggested	<i>"Incorporate continuous assessment alongside summative exams</i>
	Improvements	<i>for a holistic view of learning."</i>
	Influence of	<i>"Assessments are useful but sometimes rushed, limiting their</i>
	Assessment Methods	<i>effectiveness in improving learning."</i>

PTA Member (D)	Suggested Improvements	<i>“Training teachers in assessment strategies would improve accuracy and usefulness of results.”</i>
	Influence of Assessment Methods	<i>“Parents trust exams but feel more communication about progress is needed.”</i>
Class Teacher (E)	Suggested Improvements	<i>“Regular reports and involving parents in assessment discussions would boost pupil motivation.”</i>
	Influence of Assessment Methods	<i>“Mock and continuous assessments help pupils practice and reduce fear of exams.”</i>
	Suggested Improvements	<i>“More practical, project-based assessments could engage pupils better and improve understanding.”</i>

Primary data, 2025

The respondents broadly agreed that current assessment methods significantly impact pupils’ academic performance, though with mixed effectiveness. The Head Teacher emphasized that assessments play a critical role in pinpointing areas where pupils struggle. However, he noted that external factors such as family responsibilities or health sometimes skew results, meaning test scores may not fully represent a pupil’s abilities. He said, *“Assessment helps teachers identify weak areas, but sometimes results don’t reflect true potential due to external factors.”* The District Education Official echoed this, highlighting that while summative assessments like end-of-term exams motivate pupils to study hard, the pressure and anxiety they create can negatively affect performance. This observation aligns with local experiences during the planting season when pupils are distracted by family demands. The DOS pointed out that while assessments are valuable, their rushed administration often diminishes their potential to improve learning outcomes. The PTA Member underlined the importance of assessments for parents but stressed that limited communication on pupil progress creates a gap between school and home. Finally, the Class Teacher praised mock and continuous assessments for helping pupils get accustomed to exam conditions, thus reducing fear and improving confidence, saying, *“Mock and continuous assessments help pupils practice and reduce fear of exams.”*

All respondents identified practical ways to enhance assessment methods for better academic support. The Head Teacher advocated for more frequent formative assessments coupled with timely feedback, which he believes would provide clearer guidance to pupils. He remarked, *“We need more frequent formative assessments and better feedback mechanisms to guide pupils.”* The

District Education Official suggested combining continuous assessments with summative exams to capture a broader picture of pupil learning, which would mitigate the limitations of one-off tests. The DOS emphasized the need for enhanced teacher training on assessment techniques to improve the reliability and usefulness of test results, reflecting the local challenge of limited professional development opportunities for educators. The PTA Member recommended regular communication with parents through detailed reports and meetings to engage them actively in their children's academic progress, noting, "*Regular reports and involving parents in assessment discussions would boost pupil motivation.*" Lastly, the Class Teacher proposed integrating practical, project-based assessments to complement traditional exams, believing these would increase pupil engagement and deepen understanding, stating, "*More practical, project-based assessments could engage pupils better and improve understanding.*" This analysis reflects the nuanced views of various education stakeholders in Puranga Town Council. While current assessments have a positive influence by identifying weaknesses and motivating pupils, challenges such as anxiety, external distractions, and communication gaps reduce their full potential. The suggested improvements focus on enhancing formative and continuous assessments, improving teacher skills, increasing parental involvement, and adopting diverse assessment formats to create a more supportive and effective learning environment.

Chapter Five

Discussion, Results, Summary of Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the findings from the study on assessment practices and academic performance in Government Aided Primary Schools in Puranga Town Council. It addresses the three main objectives: to explore assessment methods currently used, to examine the level of academic performance among pupils, and to establish the relationship between assessment methods and academic performance. The chapter concludes with key conclusions, recommendations for improving assessment practices, and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 Objective I: Assessment Methods

The findings from Puranga Town Council revealed that formative assessment practices were the most positively perceived assessment methods among teachers and stakeholders in government-aided primary schools. Respondents indicated that formative assessment helps teachers identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses, provide feedback, and improve lesson delivery. These findings support Black and Wiliam (2020), who argued that formative assessment improves learning through continuous feedback and instructional adjustment. Similarly, Heritage (2021) observed that formative assessment promotes individualized learning and learner participation. However, Mertler (2021) contrasted this view by arguing that formative assessment may not be effectively implemented in schools with inadequate resources and overcrowded classrooms because teachers struggle to provide timely feedback to all learners.

The study further established that formative assessment improves learner participation and classroom engagement. Teachers explained that regular exercises, oral questions, and classroom discussions help pupils understand difficult concepts and improve academic performance. These findings agree with Hattie and Timperley (2021), who found that continuous feedback improves learners' motivation and self-regulation. Likewise, Gardner (2021) noted that formative assessment encourages active learning and critical thinking among learners. In contrast, Guskey (2021) argued that excessive dependence on formative assessment may increase teachers' workload and reduce effectiveness when teachers handle large classes with limited instructional support.

The findings also revealed that dialogue between teachers and pupils during formative assessment was limited due to time constraints and overcrowded classrooms. Teachers reported difficulties in conducting regular interactive feedback sessions with individual pupils. These findings support Tanner and Jones (2020), who observed that effective formative assessment requires sufficient teacher time and learner interaction. Similarly, Black and Wiliam (2020) emphasized that meaningful feedback is essential for improving learning outcomes. However, Mertler (2021) contrasted this by arguing that in many developing countries, assessment

practices remain examination-oriented, making interactive formative assessment difficult to implement consistently.

The study found that summative assessment methods such as end-of-term examinations, mock examinations, and the Primary Leaving Examination were positively perceived because they help measure pupils' academic achievement. Respondents explained that examinations motivate learners to revise and prepare seriously for academic activities. These findings support Guskey and Hargreaves (2021), who argued that summative assessments provide measurable indicators of educational achievement and accountability. Similarly, Nabunya (2020) noted that national examinations help evaluate effectiveness of teaching and learning processes. However, Mugisha (2021) contrasted this view by arguing that excessive emphasis on examinations encourages rote memorization instead of critical thinking and practical understanding among learners.

The study further established that summative assessments provide limited opportunities for continuous improvement because feedback is often provided after final grading. Some teachers reported that pupils focus mainly on passing examinations rather than understanding concepts deeply. These findings agree with Mertler (2021), who explained that summative assessment mainly evaluates achievement at the end of instruction and provides limited opportunities for corrective intervention. Similarly, Okiror (2022) found that examination pressure negatively affects learners' creativity and motivation. In contrast, Guskey and Hargreaves (2021) argued that summative assessments remain important because they provide standardized measures of learners' performance and help determine educational progression.

The findings also revealed that continuous assessment practices moderately improve pupils' academic performance because they allow teachers to monitor learner progress continuously. Teachers explained that continuous assessment helps identify learning difficulties early and encourages learner participation throughout the academic term. These findings support Gardner (2021), who argued that continuous assessment promotes learner-centered teaching and active participation. Likewise, Hattie (2021) observed that regular assessment and feedback improve learner motivation and academic achievement. However, Guskey (2021) contrasted this by noting that continuous assessment may become difficult to implement effectively where teachers experience heavy workload and insufficient instructional resources.

The study further found that implementation of assessment methods in government-aided primary schools is affected by challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching materials, and limited teacher training opportunities. Teachers reported that these challenges reduce their ability to provide individualized support and effective assessment feedback. These findings support UNESCO (2021), which observed that inadequate educational resources negatively affect effective assessment and teaching practices in developing countries. Similarly, the Ministry of Education and Sports (2021) reported that many rural schools in Uganda lack sufficient teaching materials and trained personnel. In contrast, Darling-Hammond (2021) argued that even in resource-constrained schools, effective teacher commitment and innovative instructional approaches can still improve learning outcomes and assessment effectiveness.

5.1.2 Level of Academic Performance in Puranga Town Council

The study found that academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council declines as pupils progress to upper primary classes, especially from Primary Six to Primary Seven. Respondents explained that many pupils experience difficulties in literacy and numeracy at higher levels of learning. These findings support UNICEF (2020), which reported that learners in low-resource settings often demonstrate declining academic achievement in upper primary levels due to inadequate learning support and increased academic demands. Similarly, UNESCO (2021) observed that poor learning conditions contribute to low completion rates and poor academic outcomes among primary school learners. In contrast, Darling-Hammond (2021) argued that with effective teaching methods and strong learner support systems, pupils can maintain high academic performance despite limited school resources.

The findings further revealed that absenteeism and school dropout negatively affect pupils' academic performance in Puranga Town Council. Respondents explained that poor road networks and heavy rainfall during rainy seasons prevent some pupils from attending school regularly. These findings agree with the World Bank (2020), which established that environmental and infrastructural challenges reduce school attendance and continuity of learning in rural communities. Similarly, Lewin (2021) observed that irregular attendance contributes to poor concentration, weak academic progression, and increased dropout rates among learners. However, UNICEF (2021) contrasted this by arguing that community-based educational support

programs can reduce absenteeism and improve learner retention even in disadvantaged rural settings.

The study also established that parental involvement significantly influences pupils' academic performance. Respondents explained that pupils whose parents monitor homework, provide scholastic materials, and encourage learning tend to perform better academically. These findings support Epstein (2020), who argued that parental involvement positively influences learner motivation, discipline, and academic achievement. Likewise, MoES (2021) reported that pupils who receive family support perform better in classroom activities and examinations. In contrast, Oketch and Rolleston (2020) argued that parental involvement alone may not improve academic performance where schools lack adequate teachers, learning materials, and effective instructional practices.

The findings further revealed that inadequate educational resources such as classrooms, desks, textbooks, and instructional materials negatively affect pupils' academic performance. Respondents reported that overcrowded classrooms limit learner concentration and teacher effectiveness during lesson delivery and assessment activities. These findings support UNESCO (2021), which established that inadequate learning infrastructure negatively affects learner participation and academic achievement in developing countries. Similarly, UNICEF (2020) observed that shortages of teaching and learning materials contribute to poor educational outcomes in rural schools. However, Hattie (2021) contrasted this by arguing that teacher effectiveness and learner motivation may sometimes have a greater influence on academic achievement than availability of physical resources alone.

The study also found that teacher-related factors significantly influence academic performance among pupils. Respondents explained that teacher competence, commitment, and use of learner-centered teaching methods improve learners' understanding and participation in classroom activities. These findings support Darling-Hammond (2021), who emphasized that teacher quality is one of the strongest determinants of learners' academic achievement. Similarly, Gardner (2021) observed that teachers who regularly assess learners and provide feedback improve learning outcomes significantly. In contrast, Lewin (2021) argued that even competent teachers may fail to improve academic performance where socio-economic challenges such as poverty and absenteeism persist among learners.

The findings further established that socio-economic challenges negatively affect pupils' academic performance in government-aided primary schools. Respondents explained that some pupils engage in domestic work, farming, and income-generating activities instead of concentrating on school activities. These findings agree with the World Bank (2021), which reported that poverty contributes to absenteeism, poor feeding conditions, and reduced academic concentration among learners. Similarly, UNESCO (2020) observed that children from low-income families often experience poor educational outcomes due to lack of scholastic materials and limited parental support. However, Epstein (2020) contrasted this by arguing that strong school-community partnerships can help reduce negative effects of poverty on learner achievement.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council is influenced by educational, social, economic, and environmental factors. The findings support UNICEF (2021), which emphasized that effective learning requires adequate educational resources, teacher support, parental involvement, and regular school attendance. Similarly, UNESCO (2021) argued that improvement in school infrastructure and teacher capacity enhances learner achievement. In contrast, Hattie (2021) argued that learner motivation, self-regulation, and classroom interaction may influence academic performance more strongly than external school conditions alone.

5.1.3 Relationship Between Assessment Methods and Academic Performance

The study found that formative, summative, and continuous assessment methods are positively related to academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council. Respondents explained that effective assessment practices help teachers identify learning gaps, monitor learners' progress, and improve instructional strategies. These findings support Black and Wiliam (2020), who argued that assessment improves teaching effectiveness and learner achievement when used appropriately. Similarly, Gardner (2021) observed that continuous assessment and feedback improve learner understanding and classroom participation. In contrast, Mertler (2021) argued that assessment methods alone cannot improve academic performance where schools experience shortages of learning materials, trained teachers, and supportive learning environments.

The findings further revealed that formative assessment has the strongest positive relationship with pupils' academic performance compared to summative and continuous assessment methods. Teachers explained that regular class exercises, oral assessments, and immediate feedback help pupils understand difficult concepts and improve classroom participation. These findings agree with Hattie and Timperley (2021), who established that continuous feedback improves learner motivation, engagement, and academic achievement. Similarly, Heritage (2021) argued that formative assessment supports individualized learning and learner-centered teaching. However, Guskey (2021) contrasted this by noting that formative assessment may be difficult to implement effectively in overcrowded classrooms where teachers lack sufficient time for individualized feedback.

The study also established that summative assessment contributes to academic performance by motivating learners to prepare seriously for examinations and academic activities. Respondents explained that end-of-term examinations and mock examinations encourage pupils to revise and compete academically. These findings support Guskey and Hargreaves (2021), who argued that summative assessments provide measurable indicators of learners' academic achievement and educational progress. Likewise, Nabunya (2020) observed that national examinations help determine learners' readiness for progression to higher educational levels. In contrast, Mugisha (2021) argued that overemphasis on examinations promotes rote learning and memorization instead of creativity and critical thinking skills among learners.

The findings further revealed that continuous assessment positively influences pupils' academic performance because it allows teachers to monitor learners' progress throughout the learning process. Teachers explained that continuous assessment helps identify weak learners early and provide corrective support before final examinations. These findings agree with Tanner and Jones (2020), who observed that continuous assessment improves learner confidence and reduces fear associated with final examinations. Similarly, Hattie (2021) established that regular monitoring and feedback improve learners' academic outcomes and participation. However, Gardner (2021) contrasted this by arguing that continuous assessment may become ineffective where teachers lack adequate training and assessment guidelines.

The study also found that effective assessment methods improve learners' participation, confidence, and classroom interaction. Respondents explained that pupils become more active in

learning activities when teachers provide regular feedback and opportunities for improvement. These findings support Heritage (2021), who argued that assessment practices that encourage dialogue and learner participation improve understanding and motivation. Similarly, Black and Wiliam (2020) observed that learners perform better academically when assessment is integrated into daily teaching activities. In contrast, Mertler (2021) argued that poorly implemented assessment practices may increase learner anxiety and reduce motivation, especially where feedback is delayed or unclear.

The findings further established that several challenges limit effectiveness of assessment methods in government-aided primary schools. Teachers reported that overcrowded classrooms, inadequate instructional materials, and heavy teacher workload reduce their ability to conduct regular assessments and provide individualized feedback. These findings support UNESCO (2021), which observed that inadequate educational resources negatively affect quality assessment and instructional practices in developing countries. Similarly, the Ministry of Education and Sports (2021) reported that many rural schools in Uganda lack adequate teacher support and assessment materials. In contrast, Darling-Hammond (2021) argued that committed teachers using innovative teaching strategies can still improve learner achievement even under resource-constrained conditions.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that assessment methods significantly influence academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council. The findings support Black and Wiliam (2020), who emphasized that effective assessment practices improve learning, learner participation, and instructional quality. Similarly, Gardner (2021) argued that continuous assessment and learner-centered feedback enhance academic achievement and classroom engagement. However, Guskey (2021) contrasted this by explaining that assessment practices alone cannot fully improve academic performance without addressing challenges such as poverty, absenteeism, inadequate learning resources, and limited parental support.

5.1.4 Formative Assessment and Academic Performance

The study found that formative assessment has a strong positive relationship with academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council. Respondents explained that formative assessment helps teachers identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses,

provide continuous feedback, and improve lesson delivery according to learners' needs. These findings support Black and Wiliam (2020), who argued that formative assessment improves learning through timely feedback and instructional adjustment. Similarly, Heritage (2021) observed that formative assessment promotes individualized learning and active learner participation. In contrast, Mertler (2021) argued that formative assessment may be difficult to implement effectively in overcrowded classrooms where teachers lack adequate time and resources to provide regular feedback to all learners.

The findings further revealed that formative assessment improves learners' engagement and classroom participation. Teachers explained that oral questions, class exercises, and discussions encourage pupils to participate actively in learning activities and improve understanding of concepts. These findings agree with Hattie and Timperley (2021), who established that continuous feedback and learner engagement improve motivation and academic achievement. Similarly, Gardner (2021) observed that formative assessment supports learner-centered teaching and critical thinking development among pupils. However, Guskey (2021) contrasted this by noting that excessive use of formative assessment may increase teacher workload and reduce effectiveness where schools have limited teaching staff and instructional materials.

The study also established that formative assessment supports differentiated teaching and personalized learning. Teachers reported that assessment results help them identify slow learners and provide additional support where necessary. One teacher explained that "formative assessments guide lesson planning because they help identify areas where pupils are struggling." These findings support Heritage (2021), who argued that formative assessment enables teachers to adjust instructional strategies according to learners' individual needs. Likewise, Black and Wiliam (2020) emphasized that formative assessment helps teachers make informed instructional decisions. In contrast, Tanner and Jones (2020) argued that personalized assessment approaches may be difficult to sustain in large classrooms common in rural government-aided schools.

The findings further revealed that formative assessment improves teacher-pupil interaction and classroom communication. Respondents explained that regular feedback and discussions between teachers and learners improve understanding and learner confidence. These findings support Hattie and Timperley (2021), who observed that meaningful dialogue between teachers

and learners enhances self-regulation and academic performance. Similarly, Carless (2021) argued that interactive assessment practices improve learner reflection and participation. However, Mertler (2021) contrasted this by explaining that inadequate teacher training and time constraints often limit effective communication and feedback during assessment processes.

The study also found that formative assessment helps identify learning gaps early and allows corrective measures before final examinations. Teachers explained that regular tests and classroom exercises enable them to detect weak areas and revise difficult topics promptly. These findings agree with Black and Wiliam (2020), who emphasized that early identification of learning difficulties improves academic achievement and reduces examination failure. Similarly, Bennett (2020) observed that regular assessment familiarizes learners with classroom expectations and improves performance over time. In contrast, Guskey (2021) argued that if assessment feedback is delayed or poorly communicated, formative assessment may fail to improve learner performance effectively.

The findings further established that implementation of formative assessment in government-aided primary schools faces challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited instructional materials, and inadequate teacher support. Respondents explained that these challenges reduce teachers' ability to provide individualized feedback and regular learner interaction. These findings support UNESCO (2021), which observed that lack of educational resources negatively affects quality assessment and learner achievement in developing countries. Similarly, the Ministry of Education and Sports (2021) reported that many rural schools in Uganda experience shortages of trained teachers and learning materials. In contrast, Darling-Hammond (2021) argued that committed teachers using innovative classroom strategies can still improve assessment effectiveness even under difficult conditions.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that formative assessment significantly improves academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council through continuous feedback, learner participation, and early identification of learning gaps. The findings support Black and Wiliam (2020), who emphasized that formative assessment improves instructional quality and learner achievement. Similarly, Hattie and Timperley (2021) observed that effective feedback and learner engagement positively influence academic outcomes. However, Mertler

(2021) contrasted this by arguing that effectiveness of formative assessment depends heavily on availability of resources, teacher competence, and manageable class sizes.

5.1.5 Summative Assessment and Academic Performance

The study found that summative assessment has a positive relationship with academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council. Respondents explained that examinations, mock tests, and end-of-term assessments motivate pupils to revise seriously and prepare for academic activities. These findings support Guskey and Hargreaves (2021), who argued that summative assessment provides measurable indicators of learners' achievement and educational progress. Similarly, Popham (2020) observed that summative assessments help determine whether learning objectives have been achieved successfully. In contrast, Mugisha (2021) argued that overemphasis on examinations may encourage memorization and reduce development of creativity and critical thinking among learners.

The findings further revealed that summative assessment helps teachers evaluate learners' overall understanding and readiness for progression to higher educational levels. Teachers explained that examinations provide clear performance benchmarks that help identify high-performing and low-performing learners. These findings agree with Nabunya (2020), who observed that national examinations play an important role in determining educational placement and monitoring academic standards. Similarly, Mertler (2021) noted that summative assessments support accountability and educational evaluation. However, Jansen (2022) contrasted this by arguing that high-stakes examinations often create excessive pressure and anxiety among learners, negatively affecting performance and emotional well-being.

The study also established that summative assessment influences teaching methods and classroom practices. Respondents explained that teachers often focus heavily on examination topics and revision activities before final examinations. These findings support Popham (2020), who argued that examinations influence instructional priorities and learner preparation strategies. Similarly, Guskey and Hargreaves (2021) observed that summative assessment encourages learners to focus on achieving academic targets. In contrast, Ravitz (2020) argued that

examination-oriented teaching may limit learner participation, creativity, and practical understanding because teachers prioritize test preparation over meaningful learning experiences.

The findings further revealed that summative assessment contributes to competition and motivation among learners. Some respondents explained that pupils work harder academically because they want to achieve better grades in examinations and mock tests. These findings agree with Bennett (2020), who observed that examinations can motivate learners to improve study habits and academic effort. Similarly, Nabunya (2020) noted that performance in national examinations often encourages pupils to remain focused on educational goals. However, Harlen (2020) contrasted this by explaining that excessive competition associated with examinations may increase stress and discourage weaker learners from active participation in classroom activities.

The study also established that summative assessment provides limited opportunities for continuous improvement because feedback is often provided after grading has been completed. Teachers reported that pupils mainly focus on examination results instead of understanding mistakes and improving learning processes. These findings support Mertler (2021), who argued that summative assessment mainly evaluates achievement at the end of instruction and offers limited opportunities for corrective feedback. Similarly, Jansen (2022) observed that delayed feedback reduces effectiveness of examinations in improving learning outcomes. In contrast, Guskey and Hargreaves (2021) argued that summative assessments remain important because they provide standardized measures necessary for academic reporting and certification.

The findings further revealed that implementation of summative assessment in government-aided primary schools is affected by challenges such as inadequate teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms, and examination anxiety among pupils. Respondents explained that these challenges affect learners' concentration and overall examination performance. These findings support UNESCO (2021), which established that poor learning conditions negatively affect learners' achievement in standardized examinations. Similarly, the Ministry of Education and Sports (2021) reported that rural schools in Uganda often experience inadequate assessment resources and poor learning environments. In contrast, Darling-Hammond (2021) argued that supportive

teaching methods and learner motivation can still improve examination performance even under challenging educational conditions.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that summative assessment positively influences academic performance in government-aided primary schools through measurement of achievement, learner motivation, and educational accountability. The findings support Popham (2020), who emphasized that summative assessment helps evaluate cumulative learning outcomes and academic standards. Similarly, Guskey and Hargreaves (2021) observed that examinations remain important tools for measuring educational achievement. However, Ravitz (2020) contrasted this by arguing that overdependence on examinations may undermine creativity, critical thinking, and learner-centered teaching approaches.

5.1.6 Continuous Assessment and Academic Performance

The study found that continuous assessment has a strong positive relationship with academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council. Respondents explained that continuous assessment helps teachers monitor learners' progress regularly and provide timely support to struggling pupils. These findings support Brown (2021), who argued that continuous assessment improves learning through regular feedback and progressive evaluation of learner performance. Similarly, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2020) observed that ongoing assessment encourages learners to take responsibility for their academic progress. In contrast, Harlen (2020) argued that continuous assessment may be difficult to implement effectively where teachers lack training and assessment guidelines.

The findings further revealed that continuous assessment improves learner participation and confidence because assessment activities are conducted progressively throughout the term. Teachers explained that regular assignments, projects, and classroom participation reduce fear associated with final examinations. These findings agree with Sadler (2020), who established that continuous assessment improves learner confidence and academic engagement through frequent feedback and reflection. Similarly, Bennett (2020) observed that practice-based assessment familiarizes learners with examination expectations and reduces anxiety. However,

Guskey (2021) contrasted this by noting that continuous assessment may increase teacher workload and become burdensome where schools lack adequate staffing and resources.

The study also established that continuous assessment helps identify learning difficulties early and allows teachers to provide corrective support before final examinations. Respondents explained that teachers can monitor learner progress continuously and revise difficult topics when necessary. These findings support Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2020), who argued that continuous feedback improves learner self-regulation and academic achievement. Similarly, Gardner (2021) observed that continuous assessment supports adaptive teaching and individualized learner support. In contrast, Harlen (2020) argued that inconsistent assessment practices and lack of clear criteria may reduce reliability and fairness in continuous assessment implementation.

The findings further revealed that continuous assessment promotes active learning and learner-centered teaching approaches. Teachers explained that pupils become more engaged in classroom activities when assessment is integrated into daily learning processes. These findings agree with Brown (2021), who observed that continuous assessment strengthens learner participation and reinforces classroom concepts progressively. Similarly, Carless (2021) argued that learner-centered assessment practices improve understanding and long-term retention of knowledge. However, Ravitz (2020) contrasted this by explaining that excessive assessment activities may reduce time available for broader instructional and co-curricular activities.

The study also established that continuous assessment improves communication between teachers, pupils, and parents regarding learner progress. Respondents explained that regular assessment reports and feedback help parents monitor academic development of their children. These findings support Boud (2021), who argued that continuous assessment strengthens collaboration between teachers, learners, and parents in supporting academic improvement. Similarly, Epstein (2020) observed that parental involvement improves learner motivation and educational achievement. In contrast, Jansen (2022) argued that ineffective communication and delayed feedback may limit the usefulness of continuous assessment information to learners and parents.

The findings further revealed that implementation of continuous assessment in government-aided primary schools is constrained by challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate instructional materials, and limited teacher training opportunities. Teachers explained that these challenges affect consistency, fairness, and quality of assessment practices. These findings support UNESCO (2021), which reported that limited educational resources negatively affect implementation of learner-centered assessment methods in developing countries. Similarly, the Ministry of Education and Sports (2021) observed that many rural schools in Uganda lack sufficient teacher support and assessment materials. In contrast, Darling-Hammond (2021) argued that innovative teaching approaches and teacher commitment can still improve effectiveness of continuous assessment practices even under difficult school conditions.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that continuous assessment significantly improves academic performance in government-aided primary schools through regular feedback, learner participation, and early identification of learning difficulties. The findings support Brown (2021), who emphasized that continuous assessment promotes sustained academic growth and learner engagement. Similarly, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2020) observed that ongoing assessment improves learner self-regulation and educational achievement. However, Harlen (2020) contrasted this by arguing that successful implementation of continuous assessment depends heavily on teacher competence, adequate resources, and consistency in assessment practices.

5.2 Summary of Results

This study set out to explore the relationship between assessment methods and academic performance in government-aided primary schools within Puranga Town Council. It specifically addressed three objectives: to explore the existing assessment practices used in these schools, to examine the current level of academic performance among pupils, and to establish the relationship between different assessment methods and academic performance.

Firstly, the study revealed that a variety of assessment practices are used in the government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council, with a strong emphasis on continuous, formative, and summative assessment methods. Teachers commonly employed continuous assessments such as assignments, classroom exercises, group work, and regular testing. Formative assessments, including quizzes, observations, feedback sessions, and discussions, were used frequently to monitor pupil understanding during the learning process. Summative assessments were conducted at the end of academic terms or units, often taking the form of end-of-term examinations or national assessments like the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE). The findings indicated that while all three forms of assessment are practiced, their effectiveness varied depending on frequency, feedback mechanisms, and teacher preparedness.

Secondly, regarding the level of academic performance in these schools, the study found a moderate but gradually improving performance among pupils. Factors influencing academic outcomes included assessment practices, teacher engagement, pupil attendance, and parental involvement. However, performance discrepancies were noted between pupils who received regular feedback through continuous and formative assessments and those assessed primarily through summative methods. Schools that consistently applied multiple forms of assessment showed better academic outcomes, suggesting the need for a holistic assessment framework.

Lastly, in examining the relationship between assessment methods and academic performance, the study employed Pearson correlation analysis. The results indicated statistically significant and strong positive correlations between each assessment method and academic performance. Continuous assessment showed the strongest correlation, followed closely by formative assessment, and summative assessment. These findings imply that regular and structured assessments especially those that provide timely feedback and involve pupils in active learning—play a critical role in enhancing academic performance. Continuous and formative assessments were particularly effective due to their ability to identify learning gaps and support individualized learning interventions. The study therefore underscores the importance of adopting balanced, learner-centered assessment approaches in government-aided schools to foster academic improvement.

In conclusion, the study provides strong evidence that well-implemented assessment methods significantly impact pupils' academic performance. It recommends strengthening continuous and

formative assessment practices and integrating them systematically with summative evaluations to promote sustained academic growth in primary education within Puranga Town Council.

5.3 Conclusions

The study set out to explore assessment practices and their relationship with academic performance in government-aided primary schools within Puranga Town Council. The findings revealed that while a variety of assessment methods are employed including formative, summative, and continuous assessments their application is inconsistent and often skewed toward summative approaches such as end-of-term examinations. Many teachers demonstrated limited use of formative and continuous assessment techniques that offer timely feedback and support individualized learning. This indicates a gap in the effective implementation of comprehensive assessment strategies that could enhance the teaching and learning process.

Regarding academic performance, the study established that most government-aided primary schools in Puranga Town Council exhibited moderate performance levels. Some schools, however, were struggling with persistent underachievement, particularly in core subjects. Factors contributing to this situation included insufficient instructional support, lack of regular formative feedback, and inadequate teacher follow-up on learner progress. The findings suggest that academic performance is closely tied to how assessments are conducted and used to inform instruction.

Finally, the study concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between the effective use of assessment methods and academic performance. In particular, continuous assessment—when implemented consistently was associated with better learner outcomes, as it allowed for ongoing monitoring and timely intervention. Formative assessments also played a significant role in guiding instructional decisions and addressing learning gaps. In contrast, summative assessments, although common, were less effective in driving performance improvement when used in isolation without complementing formative or continuous strategies.

5.4 Recommendations

The Ministry of Education and Sports should strengthen policies that promote effective use of formative, summative, and continuous assessment methods in government-aided primary schools.

Regular teacher training and professional development programs should be organized to equip teachers with modern assessment skills, learner-centered teaching approaches, and effective feedback techniques. This will improve quality of assessment and enhance pupils' academic performance.

Headteachers and school management committees should establish clear school-based assessment policies that encourage regular learner evaluation and timely feedback. Schools should continuously review pupils' performance data to identify learning gaps and organize remedial teaching, peer learning activities, and academic support programs for weak learners. This will help improve learners' understanding and examination performance.

The government and development partners should increase provision of educational resources such as classrooms, desks, textbooks, instructional materials, and assessment tools in government-aided primary schools. Adequate teaching and learning resources will improve classroom interaction, effective assessment implementation, and learners' academic achievement. Recruitment of additional teachers should also be prioritized to reduce teacher workload and overcrowded classrooms.

Parents and local communities should be sensitized on the importance of supporting children's education through regular school attendance, provision of scholastic materials, and monitoring learners' academic progress. Strong collaboration between schools, parents, and community leaders will help reduce absenteeism, school dropout, and poor academic performance among pupils in Puranga Town Council.

5.5 Areas for Further Studies

Future studies should examine teachers' competencies, attitudes, and preparedness in implementing formative, summative, and continuous assessment methods in government-aided primary schools. Such research would help identify challenges affecting assessment practices

and provide guidance for improving teacher training and professional development programs in Uganda's primary education sector.

Further research should also compare assessment practices and academic performance between urban and rural government-aided primary schools. Comparative studies would help identify contextual differences such as resource availability, teacher capacity, parental involvement, and learning environments that influence pupils' academic achievement in different geographical settings.

Additional studies should investigate the influence of specific assessment methods on performance in particular subjects such as Mathematics, English, Science, and Social Studies. This would provide detailed information on which assessment approaches are more effective in improving learning outcomes in different subject areas within primary schools.

Future researchers should also conduct longitudinal or experimental studies to examine the long-term effects of continuous assessment practices on pupils' academic performance and learner development. Such studies would provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness of continuous assessment programs and support formulation of appropriate educational assessment policies in Uganda.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

I'm John Bosco Ochan, a student at Gulu University conducting research on " Assessment Methods and Academic Performance of pupils in Government Aided Primary Schools in Pader

District. A Case of Puranga town council ." I kindly ask you to take a few moments to complete this questionnaire. I assure you that all responses will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

1. What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. What is your age group?

☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50 and above

3. What is your highest level of education for teachers and head teachers

☐ Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree

☐ Other (Please specify) _____

4. What is your current position?

☐ Head Teacher ☐ Classroom Teacher ☐ District Education Officer

☐ learners) _____

5. How many years have you worked in your current position?

☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1-3 years ☐ 4-6 years ☐ More than 6 years

Section B: Assessment Methods used in Government Aided Primary Schools

You can fill out the corresponding cells with "Strongly Disagree =1", "Disagree = 2," "Neutral =3," "Agree= 4," and "Strongly Agree = 5,"

Statement on Assessment Methods	1	2	3	4	5
Formative Assessment					
Formative assessments provide ongoing feedback to improve pupils' learning					

Formative assessments help identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses					
Formative assessments are used to adjust teaching methods to better meet pupils' needs					
Formative assessments are integrated regularly into the learning process					
Formative assessments enhance pupils' engagement and participation					
Formative assessments allow for personalized learning based on individual progress					
Formative assessments encourage ongoing dialogue between teachers and students					
Summative Assessment					
Summative assessments effectively measure overall pupils' achievement					
Summative assessments provide a clear benchmark for evaluating pupils' performance					
Summative assessments are used to determine pupils' readiness for advancement					
Summative assessments accurately reflect the effectiveness of instructional practices					
Summative assessments are aligned with learning objectives and standards					
Summative assessments provide reliable data for tracking pupil progress over time					
Summative assessments motivate students to perform at their best during exams					
Continuous Assessment					
Continuous assessments provide a comprehensive evaluation of pupils' progress					
Continuous assessments help teachers identify and address learning gaps in real-time					
Continuous assessments promote active participation and reflection from students					
Continuous assessments are integrated across various learning activities and subjects					
Continuous assessments foster a growth mindset by encouraging regular self-assessment					
Continuous assessments reduce test anxiety by evaluating students gradually					
Continuous assessments help maintain a consistent focus on learning throughout the term					

Section C: Level of academic performance in government-aided primary schools

You can fill out the corresponding cells with "Strongly Disagree =1", "Disagree = 2," "Neutral =3," "Agree= 4," and "Strongly Agree = 5,"

Statement on Academic Performance	1	2	3	4	5
PLE (Primary Leaving Examination)					

The PLE provides an accurate measure of pupils' overall academic performance					
The PLE effectively determines pupils' readiness for secondary education					
The PLE results reflect the quality of education provided by schools					
The PLE results are a reliable indicator of pupils' long-term academic potential					
The PLE results are influenced by external factors beyond academic performance					
Mock Exams					
Mock exams provide a good indication of pupils' readiness for the PLE					
Mock exams help identify areas where pupils need improvement before the final exams					
Mock exams simulate the conditions of the actual PLE effectively					
Mock exams provide valuable feedback for pupils to enhance their study strategies					
Mock exams are an accurate predictor of pupils' performance on the PLE					
Pre-Mock Exams					
Pre-mock exams help in assessing pupils' preparation level before the main mock exams					
Pre-mock exams provide insights into pupils' strengths and weaknesses					
Pre-mock exams are useful for adjusting study plans before major examinations					
Pre-mock exams help reduce exam anxiety by familiarizing pupils with the test format					
Pre-mock exams are well-aligned with the content and format of the final exams					

Statement on intervening variables	1	2	3	4	5
Learning Environment					
The classroom environment supports effective learning					
Adequate resources (e.g., textbooks, technology) are available to pupils					
The physical infrastructure (e.g., classroom size, seating arrangements)					

facilitates learning					
The teacher's instructional methods are well-suited to the learning environment					
The learning environment encourages pupil engagement and participation					
Parental Involvement					
Parents actively support their children's education					
Parents are involved in school activities and events					
Parents communicate regularly with teachers about their children's progress					
Parental involvement positively impacts pupils' academic performance					
Parents provide a conducive home environment for studying					
Peer Influence					
Positive peer interactions enhance pupils' motivation to learn					
Peer group dynamics influence pupils' academic performance					
Pupils are encouraged to engage in collaborative learning with peers					
Peer influence contributes to a positive learning atmosphere in the classroom					
Negative peer pressure affects pupils' academic performance					

Appendix II: Interview Guide

1. What assessment methods are currently being used in government-aided primary schools in Puranga town council ?
2. How effective do you believe these assessment methods are in measuring pupils' understanding and skills?

3. How would you describe the current level of academic performance among pupils in government-aided primary schools in Puranga town council ?
4. What factors do you think contribute most significantly to the academic performance of pupils in these schools?
5. How do the current assessment methods influence pupils' academic performance in government-aided primary schools in Puranga town council ?
6. What improvements, if any, do you think could be made to the assessment methods to better support and enhance pupils' academic performance?

Appendix III: Introductory Letter

GULU

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UNIVERSITY

TEL: +256471432922;

**OFFICE OF THE DEAN, FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND
HUMANITIES**

March 27, 2025

TO : WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to introduce to you Mr. John Bosco Ochan (Reg No. 22/U/2028/MFC/PS) a student pursuing a programme of study leading to an award Master of Education in Curriculum Studies of Gulu University, Master of Gulu University.

He is undertaking research on the Topic:

**ASSESSMENT METHODS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN
GOVERNMENT AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN PADER DISTRICT. A CASE OF
PURANGA TOWN COUNCIL**

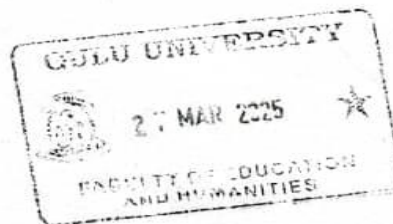
Which is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award.

Any assistance rendered to him in relation to this research work will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Denis Thaddeus Ofoyuru

Dean, Faculty of Education and Humanities



Appendix IV: Krejcie and Morgan Table

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	26	140	103	340	181	1000	276	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384
Note: "N" is Population Size "S" is Sample Size.									

Appendix V: Map of Pader District

Figure 2: Map of Pader District

