Parental Involvement on Pupils' Retention in Universal Primary Education Schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District

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Declaration

I, Lakot Christine Canogura, declare that this research dissertation entitled; "*Parental Involvement on Pupils' Retention in Universal Primary Education Schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District*" is my original work, and in no way has it ever been submitted for award in any University or other academic institution.



Signature Date

Approval

This research dissertation entitled; "*Parental Involvement on Pupils' Retention in Universal Primary Education Schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District*" produced under my guidance, has been duly reviewed and forwarded for consideration with my approval.

Sign..... Date ....10.10.2026.....

Dr. Lamaro Gloria

Sign..... Date ....8.10.26.....

Mr. Kisa Christopher Ebenezer

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved family for their unconditional love, prayers, encouragement, and sacrifices that have enabled me to complete this dissertation. Their unwavering support has been my greatest source of motivation.

Acknowledgement

I sincerely thank Almighty God for His abundant grace, guidance, protection, and strength throughout the period of my study and the successful completion of this dissertation.

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List of Abbreviations

ANOVA	: Analysis of Variance
CVI	: Content Validity Index
DV	: Dependent Variable
EO	: Education Officer
HT	: Head Teacher
IV	: Independent Variable
LRA	: Lord's Resistance Army
MoES	: Ministry of Education and Sports
OECD	: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PLE	: Primary Leaving Examination
PTA	: Parent–Teacher Association
SI	: School Inspector
SMC	: School Management Committee
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNEB	: Uganda National Examinations Board
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPE	: Universal Primary Education

Abstract

This study examined the influence of parental involvement on pupils' retention in Universal Primary Education (UPE) schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District. The study was guided by three objectives: to establish the forms of parental involvement, to determine the level of pupils' retention, and to examine the relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention. The study was anchored on Tinto's Student Retention Model and complemented by Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement. A convergent parallel mixed methods design was adopted, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently, analysed separately and merged during interpretation. A sample of 400 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula. Five UPE schools were selected purposively; parents/guardians, teachers and pupils were selected through stratified and simple random sampling, head teachers through census, while SMC members and education officers were selected purposively. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide, whose content validity (CVI = 0.93) and reliability (Cronbach's α = 0.874) were confirmed before use. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and multiple regression, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Regarding objective one, provision of scholastic materials (Mean = 3.84) and school-based involvement (Mean = 3.74) were the most practised forms of parental involvement, while home-based involvement was the least practised (Mean = 3.38). Regarding objective two, completion was high (Mean = 4.06), but regular attendance was moderate and absenteeism remained a challenge in some schools. Regarding objective three, parental involvement had a moderate, positive and significant relationship with pupils' retention ($r = 0.471$, $p < 0.01$), and the null hypothesis was rejected. The four forms of parental involvement explained 20.6% of the variation in pupils' retention (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.206$), which rose to 57.1% (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.571$) when socio-economic status, government policy and school environment were added, with school environment being the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.501$, $p < 0.001$). The study concluded that parental involvement significantly improves pupils' retention, especially where the school environment and household conditions are supportive. It recommended strengthening home school partnerships, improving implementation of UPE policy, improving school environments and supporting vulnerable households so that learners remain in school until completion.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Overview

Pupils' retention is a key indicator of the quality and efficiency of a primary education system because it shows the extent to which learners who enrol remain in school, progress through the grades and complete the cycle (UNESCO, 2020). Learners who receive social and psychosocial support from their parents or guardians are more likely to remain in school and to progress to higher levels of education (Fraysier et al., 2020). In contrast, poor grades tend to stigmatise class repeaters, which undermines their self-esteem and sense of belonging at school (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018). This study therefore examined the influence of parental involvement on pupils' retention in Universal Primary Education (UPE) schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District. This chapter presents the background, statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, research questions, hypothesis, scope, significance and conceptual framework of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

This section presents the historical, theoretical, conceptual, and contextual background of the study:

1.1.1 Historical Background

Pupil retention in formal education has undergone significant changes over time. In the early development of modern schooling systems in the United States during the 19th century, grade retention was widely applied as an academic strategy to support learners who performed poorly. Learners were required to repeat classes in order to allow additional time for academic improvement (McGinn, et al., 2020). At this stage, retention was largely considered a normal instructional practice aimed at improving academic standards. However, from the 1930s onwards, research began to challenge this approach. Studies by Ayer (1933) and Kline (1933) reported that grade retention did not lead to consistent improvement in learner achievement. Later, Goodlad (1948) as cited by Pedler, et al. (2022) also found that retention did not reduce academic differences among learners. By the mid-20th century, research began to associate grade retention with negative outcomes such as school dropout and reduced learner motivation. Hernandez, (2019) observed that learners who repeated grades were more likely to leave school before completion compared to those who progressed normally. This marked a major shift in educational thinking, where retention began to be viewed as a risk factor in schooling progression.

In the 21st century, attention has shifted from retention itself to the factors influencing learner retention in schools. Recent studies indicate that learner progression is influenced not only by academic performance but also by home and community conditions, particularly parental involvement (Nyaboke, et al. 2021). Parental support in the form of monitoring school attendance, providing learning materials, and emotional support has been associated with improved learner persistence in school.

Globally, a substantial body of research shows that parental involvement is a central factor in learner retention. In the United States, Barnard (2004), using data from the Chicago Longitudinal Study, found that parent involvement in elementary school was associated with lower rates of school dropout and higher rates of on-time school completion, while the meta-analysis by Jeynes (2007) confirmed that parental involvement has a significant positive effect on learners' academic outcomes. In the United Kingdom, Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) concluded that parental involvement at home, in the form of encouragement, discussion and supervision, had a greater effect on primary pupils' achievement and adjustment than differences in the quality of schools. Similarly, studies in OECD countries indicate that learners whose parents provide consistent academic and emotional support are more likely to complete school cycles than those with limited parental engagement (OECD, 2018; Willems & Holbein, 2022). These studies show that parental involvement has moved from being viewed as an optional extra to being regarded as an essential condition for learners' persistence in school.

In Africa, challenges related to learner retention remain evident despite the expansion of free primary education. In sub-Saharan Africa, household poverty, child labour, early marriage and limited parental engagement continue to contribute to school dropout and low completion rates (UNESCO, 2020). In Kenya, Kerei et al. (2024) reported that home-based and school-based parental involvement predicted access and retention in public primary schools, while in Rwanda, Mwizerwa and Hesbon (2024) found that retention differed widely across schools and was higher where parents closely supervised learners. In Ghana, Agbi (2024) observed that parents' participation in School Management Committees strengthened school improvement planning. These studies show that in Africa retention is not only an institutional issue but also a household and community concern, and that the role of parents becomes more critical where government resources are limited.

In Uganda, policy frameworks such as the Education Act (2008) assign responsibility to parents in supporting learners through provision of scholastic materials, school fees, and basic welfare needs. Recent studies show that learners who receive adequate parental support are more likely to remain in school and perform better academically (Emmanuel et al., 2023; Julius, 2024a). However, in some districts such as Kitgum, inconsistent parental support continues to affect

pupil retention, especially where families fail to provide basic scholastic requirements and welfare support (Aceng, 2022).

In Kitgum District, the history of pupils' retention has been shaped by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency (1986–2006), during which many families were displaced into camps, schools were relocated or closed, and the schooling of many children was interrupted (Annan et al., 2006). Following the return of families to their villages, UPE, introduced in 1997, together with investments by government and development partners, improved access to primary education in sub-counties such as Mucwini (Aceng, 2022).

1.1.2 Theoretical Background

This study was anchored on Vincent Tinto's Student Retention Model (1975) and complemented by Joyce Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement (1995).

Tinto's model explained that learners' retention in educational institutions depended on the level of academic and social integration within the school environment. According to Tinto, learners who were well integrated both academically and socially were more likely to remain in school and complete their education, while those who experienced low levels of integration were more likely to withdraw or drop out. The model therefore emphasised that retention was influenced not only by academic ability but also by the learner's sense of belonging within the school environment (Rumberger, 2011; Osterman, 2000).

In relation to this study, Tinto's model was relevant because parental involvement contributed to both academic and social integration. When parents supported learners through provision of scholastic materials, supervision of homework and encouragement, pupils were likely to perform better academically. In addition, parental participation in school activities such as meetings and communication with teachers strengthened the learner's connection to the school, which improved the child's sense of belonging and increased the likelihood of staying in school.

The model also recognised that external factors such as socio-economic conditions, distance to school and family support systems influenced retention outcomes. In Kitgum District, challenges such as poverty, long distances to school and limited parental supervision were likely to reduce learner engagement; however, active parental involvement could help to reduce these barriers by strengthening both academic support and emotional stability for learners.

On the other hand, Tinto's model was developed in higher education and did not specify the practical ways in which families supported younger learners. The study was therefore complemented by Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement (1995), which provided the forms of parental involvement that made up the independent variable of the study.

Epstein's model explained that children's education was influenced by three overlapping systems, namely the family, the school and the community. These systems were interdependent and worked together to shape learners' academic behaviour, attitudes and school engagement. When the systems operated in coordination, learners received consistent support, which improved their chances of remaining in school (Epstein, Sheldon & Hines, 2025).

The model further identified six types of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. Each of these dimensions contributed differently to a child's education: parenting provided a supportive home environment; communicating ensured the flow of information between school and home; volunteering involved parental participation in school activities; learning at home supported academic work; decision-making allowed parents to participate in school governance; and collaborating with the community strengthened external support systems.

Epstein argued that effective implementation of the six types of involvement enhanced learners' academic success and school engagement. In the context of this study, these dimensions were important because they showed how structured parental involvement contributed to pupils' retention in primary schools. When parents were actively engaged in their children's education, learners were more motivated, more disciplined and more likely to complete their education cycle (Mwanamwambwa, 2021).

Epstein's model was adopted for three main reasons. First, it directly operationalised the independent variable, since its types of involvement corresponded to the forms of parental involvement examined in this study, namely home-based involvement (parenting and learning at home), school-based involvement (volunteering and decision-making), parent–teacher communication (communicating) and provision of scholastic materials (parenting and collaborating with the community). Secondly, the model placed responsibility for children's education jointly on families, schools and communities, which was consistent with the UPE policy and the Education Act (2008) that assign specific roles to parents in Uganda. Thirdly, the model had been widely applied in studies of parental involvement in African primary schools (Kerei et al., 2024), which made it relevant to a rural, low-income setting such as Mucwini Sub-county. Therefore, while Tinto's model explained why pupils remained in or left school (the dependent variable), Epstein's model explained how parents were involved (the independent variable), and together the two models provided the theoretical basis of the study.

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

According to UNESCO (2020), pupils' retention is the extent to which learners who enrol in primary school remain continuously enrolled, progress through the expected grades and

complete the primary education cycle. Similarly, Mugume (2024) views retention in terms of the proportion of pupils enrolled in Primary One who survive to Primary Seven, which emphasises progression and completion rather than mere enrolment. In this study, pupils' retention was operationalised as pupils remaining in school and completing the primary cycle, and it was measured using four indicators adapted from UNESCO (2020) and Mugume (2024): regular attendance, which refers to the consistency with which pupils are present in school throughout the term; completion rate, which refers to the extent to which pupils progress from lower to upper primary and complete Primary Seven; dropout rate, which refers to the extent to which pupils leave school before completing the cycle; and absenteeism, which refers to the frequency with which pupils miss school days. Regular attendance and absenteeism are related but distinct: regular attendance describes the overall pattern of presence across the term, while absenteeism captures the frequency of the specific days missed, which are early warning signs of dropout.

Parental involvement, on the other hand, is defined by Epstein (1995) as the shared responsibility of families, schools and communities in supporting children's learning through parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. Mocho et al. (2025) similarly describe parental involvement as the active participation of parents or guardians in their children's education through home-based and school-based activities. In this study, parental involvement was operationalised as the extent to which parents or guardians in Mucwini Sub-county supported their children's education, and it was measured using four sub-components adapted from Epstein (1995) and Mocho et al. (2025): home-based involvement (supervising homework, setting study time, guiding academic work and monitoring attendance); school-based involvement (attending meetings and PTA gatherings, participating in school activities, contributing to school development and visiting the school to follow up pupils' progress); parent–teacher communication (two-way exchange of information on pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour); and provision of scholastic materials (providing books, pens, uniforms and other school requirements).

The study hypothesised that the four sub-components of parental involvement are positively related to pupils' retention, such that higher parental involvement leads to more regular attendance, higher completion, lower dropout and lower absenteeism. This relationship was expected to be moderated by socio-economic status, government policy and the school environment, which may strengthen or weaken the influence of parental involvement on pupils' retention (Tinto, 1993).

1.1.4 Contextual Background

This study was conducted in five UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, one of the rural sub-counties of Kitgum District in the Acholi sub-region. Mucwini Sub-county is predominantly rural, and most households depend on subsistence farming and small-scale trade, which exposes many families to seasonal income and food insecurity. The sub-county was among the areas affected by the LRA insurgency, during which households were displaced to camps and the schooling of many children was interrupted (Annan et al., 2006). Since the return of families, government and development partners have invested in UPE schools in the sub-county through construction of classrooms, recruitment of teachers and improvement of sanitation facilities (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2023).

Despite these interventions, challenges related to pupils' retention continue to be observed in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county. Records of the five selected schools show that total P1 enrolment across the five schools averaged 580 pupils annually between 2021 and 2025, while P7 enrolment dropped to an average of 210 pupils over the same period, indicating that many pupils who enroll do not complete the primary cycle. Preliminary interactions with head teachers during the researcher's familiarisation visits indicated irregular attendance, absenteeism during planting and harvesting seasons, and dropout in upper primary, where some learners engage in household chores and income-generating activities. Some pupils also attend school without basic scholastic materials such as exercise books, pens and uniforms, and sometimes without lunch, which affects their concentration and participation and may lead to repetition and dropout. In addition, parental participation in school activities such as PTA meetings, school planning sessions and supporting learning at home remains limited in some communities, which weakens communication between parents and schools.

Although the UPE policy and the Education Act (2008) outline parental responsibilities in supporting learners through provision of scholastic materials and general welfare, implementation at household level remains inconsistent in Mucwini Sub-county (Aceng, 2022). It is against this background that the study examined the influence of parental involvement on pupils' retention in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Globally, every child is expected to enrol in primary school, remain in school, progress through the grades and complete the cycle, as committed under Sustainable Development Goal 4 (UNESCO, 2020). In Uganda, the UPE policy and the Education Act (2008) assign responsibility for pupils' retention jointly to government, parents and the wider community. Government has made sustained efforts to support retention through abolition of tuition fees, payment of capitation grants, recruitment and payment of teachers, provision of instructional

materials, construction of classrooms and latrines, and school inspection (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2021). Parents, on their part, are expected to provide scholastic materials, meals, uniforms and supervision, since empirical evidence shows that parental involvement positively influences pupils' engagement and retention in school (Bouffard & Weiss, 2018; Mocho et al., 2025).

However, despite these interventions, pupils' retention in Uganda remains low. Mugume (2024) reported that only about 31.9% of pupils who enrolled in Primary One completed Primary Seven within the expected cycle. In Kitgum District, the problem is reflected in declining enrolment between lower and upper primary, high absenteeism, dropout before Primary Seven and low transition to secondary school, which also manifest in poor PLE outcomes; of the 8,998 pupils who sat the PLE in the district between 2020 and 2022, only 213 (2.4%) attained Division One, while 1,666 (18.5%) were ungraded. Some parents have also shifted the responsibility of children's education to schools, leaving pupils without scholastic materials, home support or guidance. (Otim, 2023).

Previous studies in Uganda have examined parental involvement and pupils' retention in Busoga region (Emurugat et al., 2022), Rukiga District (Tumwehe, 2024) and Kotido District (Namukwaya & Kibirige, 2014), and at national level (Mugume, 2024). However, none of these studies was conducted in Kitgum District, and most did not establish how the different forms of parental involvement relate to retention within the primary cycle in rural setting such as Mucwini Sub-county. If the problem is not addressed, more pupils are likely to drop out before completing Primary Seven, which will undermine the benefits of UPE, increase child labour and early marriage, and perpetuate household poverty in the sub-county.

Therefore, this study examined the influence of parental involvement on pupils' retention within the primary cycle (Primary One to Primary Seven) in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To examine the influence of parental involvement on pupils' retention in Universal Primary Education schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

i. To establish the forms of parental involvement (home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent–teacher communication and provision of scholastic materials) in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District.

ii. To determine the level of pupils' retention in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District.
iii. To examine the relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District.

1.5 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

i. What are the forms of parental involvement in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District?
ii. What is the level of pupils' retention in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District?
iii. What is the relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District?

1.6 Hypothesis

The study tested the following null hypothesis in relation to objective three:

H_0: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District.

H_1: There is a significant relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study comprised the content, geographical and time scope, as explained below.

1.7.1 Content Scope

The study focused on parental involvement as the independent variable and pupils' retention as the dependent variable. Parental involvement was limited to four forms: home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent–teacher communication and provision of scholastic materials. Pupils' retention was limited to regular attendance, completion rate, dropout rate and absenteeism. Socio-economic status, government policy and school environment were considered as moderating variables.

1.7.2 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in five (5) government-aided UPE primary schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District. Mucwini Sub-county was chosen because it is a predominantly rural, post-conflict sub-county where challenges of irregular attendance, dropout and limited parental involvement in UPE schools have persisted, and no previous study on parental involvement

and pupils' retention had been conducted there. The five schools were selected because they represented typical UPE schools in the sub-county where issues of pupils' retention and parental involvement were observed.

1.7.3 Time Scope

The study covered the period between 2021 and 2025. This period was selected because it captured recent trends in pupils' retention. The selected period therefore allowed the researcher to assess current recovery patterns in pupil retention and the ongoing influence of parental involvement in the post-pandemic schooling context in Kitgum District.

1.8 Significance of the Study

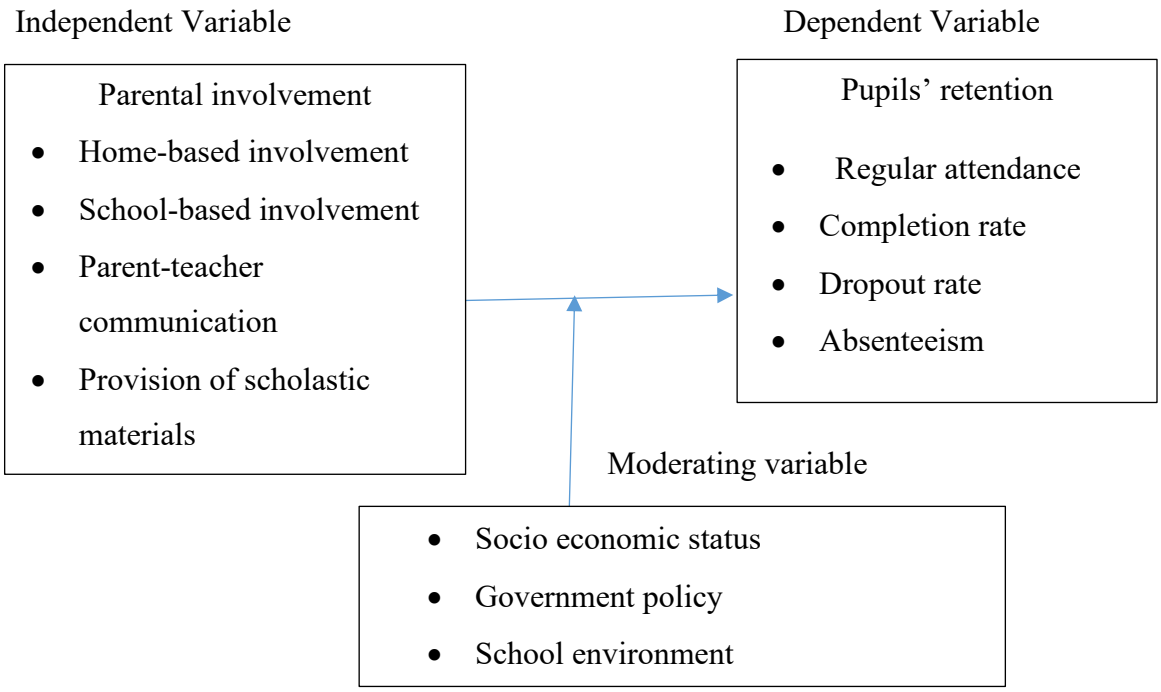
The findings of this study may guide policy makers in designing and implementing strategies that promote active parental involvement in primary education. By understanding the relationship between parental engagement and pupils' retention, policy makers can formulate policies that ensure parents and communities play a proactive role in supporting children's educational continuity, ultimately reducing dropout rates and enhancing the overall effectiveness of Universal Primary Education (UPE) programs.

School administrators, education officers, and other education implementors may use the study's findings to develop practical programs and interventions that foster parent-school partnerships. Insights from the research will help implementors identify effective forms of parental involvement, such as participation in school activities, provision of learning materials, and home-based academic support, thereby improving pupils' retention and academic performance.

This study may contribute to the existing body of knowledge on parental involvement and pupils' retention, providing both theoretical and empirical insights. Future researchers can build on these findings to explore new dimensions of parental engagement, retention strategies, and interventions aimed at improving educational outcomes in similar contexts. The study will serve as a reference point for subsequent research in educational policy, school management, and child development within Uganda and comparable settings.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Adapted from Tinto (1993) and Epstein (1995), and modified by the researcher (2026)

Figure 1.1 shows the hypothesised relationship between parental involvement (independent variable) and pupils' retention (dependent variable), moderated by socio-economic status, government policy and school environment. Parental involvement is conceptualised in four forms: home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent–teacher communication and provision of scholastic materials. Pupils' retention is measured by regular attendance, completion rate, dropout rate and absenteeism. The framework assumes that when parents support learning at home, participate in school activities, communicate with teachers and provide scholastic materials, pupils become better integrated academically and socially into school (Tinto, 1993), and are therefore more likely to attend regularly, progress through the classes and complete the primary cycle, and less likely to be absent or to drop out.

However, this relationship does not operate in isolation. Socio-economic status determines whether households can afford scholastic materials and meals and spare children from domestic labour; government policy, through UPE capitation grants, teacher deployment and inspection, determines the support available to schools; and the school environment, including facilities, safety and teacher–parent relations, determines whether pupils feel attached to school. These moderating variables may strengthen or weaken the influence of parental involvement on pupils' retention. The framework therefore provides a basis for analysing how parental involvement contributes to pupils' retention while recognising that broader contextual factors shape educational outcomes.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, existing literature related to the objectives of the study is reviewed. The chapter presents the theoretical framework, followed by a review of related literature organised according to the three objectives of the study, moving from global studies (the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe, and Asia) to African, East African and Ugandan studies. Each section ends with a paragraph on the gap identified, and the chapter closes with a summary of the literature review.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Tinto's Student Retention Model as the dominant theory, complemented by Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement. Tinto's model explained the dependent variable (why pupils remained in or left school), while Epstein's model explained the independent variable (how parents were involved in their children's education).

Tinto's Student Retention Model (Tinto, 1975, 1993) argued that retention was influenced by learners' academic and social integration within the school environment. Academic integration involved participation in learning activities and school performance, while social integration referred to learners' relationships with teachers, peers, parents and the school community. Learners who felt connected and supported within the school environment were more likely to remain in school and complete their education. Studies applying Tinto's ideas associated retention with family support, learner engagement, school participation and positive home–school relationships (Szabó et al., 2024), while Marlow and Rehman (2021) found that parental support and regular communication between parents and schools strengthened learners' commitment to schooling and reduced absenteeism and dropout. In this study, parental involvement was viewed as a factor that strengthened pupils' academic and social attachment to school through supervision, encouragement, communication and participation in school activities.

Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement (Epstein, 1995) explained how collaboration between families, schools and communities, described as overlapping spheres of influence, supported learners' education. Epstein identified six types of involvement, namely parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. According to Epstein, learners were more likely to succeed in school when parents and schools maintained regular interaction and shared responsibility for children's education (Mwinyi, 2024). Later studies applied Epstein's framework in primary schools; for instance,

Kerei et al. (2024) observed that parental participation in school meetings, supervision of learning at home, communication with teachers and contribution to school programmes improved learners' attendance, discipline and continuity in school.

Both models had limitations. Tinto's model was developed to explain student departure in higher education and was criticised for placing the burden of integration on the learner and for giving limited attention to external factors such as family finances and community obligations (Braxton et al., 1997). Its direct application to young learners in rural UPE schools, who depended on their parents for basic needs, was therefore limited. Epstein's model, on the other hand, described the types of parental involvement but was developed mainly in American schools, where parents were relatively literate and schools had structured programmes for engaging families; it gave less attention to how poverty and low literacy limited parents' ability to participate (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). In addition, it explained involvement but not directly a learner's decision to remain in or leave school.

The two models therefore complemented each other. Tinto's model provided the outcome mechanism, namely that pupils remained in school when they were academically and socially integrated, while Epstein's model provided the means through which parents contributed to that integration, namely home-based involvement, school-based involvement, communication with teachers and provision of scholastic materials. Combining the two models enabled the study to explain the forms of parental involvement (objective one), the level of pupils' retention (objective two) and the relationship between them (objective three), while the moderating variables addressed the external factors that both models under-emphasised.

2.2 Forms of Parental Involvement in Universal Primary Education Schools

In the United States, Henderson and Mapp (2002), in a synthesis of research on school, family and community connections, identified home-based activities such as supervising homework and discussing school with children, and school-based activities such as attending meetings, volunteering and participating in school governance, as the main forms of parental involvement associated with learners' success. Kocsis (2024), in a review of parental volunteering, similarly found that parents participate through classroom assistance, school cleaning, maintenance of facilities and supervision of co-curricular activities, but cautioned that inviting parents to school events alone is not enough to sustain meaningful involvement. These studies, however, were conducted in well-resourced school systems and focused mainly on academic achievement rather than retention.

In the United Kingdom and Europe, attendance of school meetings and parent–teacher conferences is one of the most common forms of parental involvement (Barce, 2025). Munthe

and Westergård (2023), in a systematic review, observed that parent–teacher conferences provide a formal platform through which parents interact with teachers about learners' attendance, discipline and progress, while Kiely et al. (2019) in Ireland found that school meetings strengthen communication because teachers share information directly with parents. Castro et al. (2020) further found that parents assist learners through supervision of homework, reading and revision, while Barnes et al. (2020) and Rubie-Davies (2024) found that parents guide children through daily discussions about school experiences, future aspirations and behaviour. In England, Smith (2021) noted that involving parents in decision-making strengthens communication between schools and communities. However, these studies focused on how schools organise involvement and gave limited attention to parents who face poverty and low literacy, as is the case in rural Uganda.

In Asia, Dong et al. (2020) in China observed that parenting includes supervision of children's behaviour, establishment of study routines, monitoring of attendance and provision of learning materials, and that home learning support became more common during the COVID-19 school closures. Alam and Hamzah (2025) found that parents contribute money, labour and materials towards school improvement through PTA and school management structures, while Paul et al. (2021) in India identified attendance of PTA meetings, discussion of academic progress with teachers and supervision of homework as the main forms of parental involvement. Although these studies identify similar forms of involvement, they were conducted in contexts with higher household incomes and parental literacy than rural Uganda.

In Africa, participation in school governance and material contribution are prominent forms of parental involvement. In Ghana, Agbi (2024) observed that parents participate in school governance through PTAs and School Management Committees, where issues of discipline, school development and learner welfare are discussed and decided. The World Bank (2021) similarly noted that parental and community contributions, through fundraising, labour and provision of learning materials, continue to supplement government support in many schools in sub-Saharan Africa. These studies show that in African settings parental involvement is largely collective and school-initiated, but they did not examine how such involvement relates to pupils remaining in school.

In East Africa, Jeptoo (2024) in Nandi County, Kenya, observed that parental volunteering commonly occurs through communal activities organised by schools and PTAs, particularly school construction, compound maintenance and learner supervision. Kerei et al. (2024) in Kajiado County, Kenya, found that both home-based involvement (provision of scholastic materials and supervision of learning) and school-based involvement (attendance of meetings and participation in school programmes) were practised by parents of public primary school

pupils. However, these studies did not establish which of the forms was most practised in rural schools.

In Uganda, Emurugat et al. (2022), drawing on children's views in Busoga region, examined the partnership roles played by parents to promote retention, such as providing scholastic materials, meeting school requirements, attending school meetings and communicating with teachers. Ugandan policy, through the Education Act (2008), also specifies the provision of scholastic materials, meals and uniforms as key parental responsibilities under UPE. Nevertheless, the available Ugandan studies were conducted outside Northern Uganda and did not consider the post-conflict context of Kitgum District.

The reviewed literature shows that the forms of parental involvement include home-based involvement, school-based involvement, communication with teachers and provision of materials. However, most of the studies were conducted in the United States, Europe and Asia, where parents are relatively literate and schools are well resourced (contextual gap), and most focused on academic achievement rather than retention (empirical gap). The few African and Ugandan studies were conducted outside Kitgum District and relied mainly on either questionnaires or children's views (methodological gap). The present study therefore established the forms of parental involvement practised in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county using both questionnaires and interviews.

2.3 Level of Pupils' Retention in Universal Primary Education Schools

Globally, retention is measured using indicators such as attendance, progression, survival and completion rates (UNESCO, 2020). In the United States, Rumberger (2011) showed that dropping out is a gradual process of disengagement that often begins with absenteeism and grade repetition in the early grades, while Barnard (2004), using the Chicago Longitudinal Study, found that pupils whose parents were involved in elementary school had lower dropout and higher on-time completion rates. In Europe, Szabó et al. (2024) reported that learners who actively participated in school activities and maintained positive relationships with teachers were less likely to disengage, whereas poor attendance, weak engagement and limited family support increased the likelihood of early school leaving. However, these studies were conducted in high-income countries with near-universal primary completion, where the challenges of retention differ from those of rural Uganda.

In Asia, Kumar et al. (2023), using longitudinal data from India, found that school dropout among adolescents was associated with household socio-economic conditions and the level of parental involvement, while Masing and Astuti (2022) in Indonesia identified limited parental supervision, weak educational support and poverty as major causes of dropout in primary

schools. Barragán-Moreno et al. (2025), in an umbrella review, similarly noted that dropout and low retention are associated with household poverty, inadequate school facilities, weak parental supervision and long distances to school. These studies, however, examined the causes of dropout rather than the level of retention in specific schools.

In Africa, Tembo (2022) examined the factors affecting the retention levels of pupils in public primary schools in Kitwe District, Zambia, and found that both home and school factors influenced whether pupils remained in school. In Rwanda, Mwizerwa and Hesbon (2024) found that retention rates differed widely across schools, with some schools registering retention levels below 50% while others recorded rates above 70%; higher retention was associated with regular attendance, parental supervision and stable school environments, while rural schools with inadequate facilities and high household poverty recorded lower completion and progression rates. Nevertheless, the Zambian and Rwandan contexts differ from Northern Uganda in terms of social and economic conditions.

In Kenya, Mutinda and Ochieng (2022) found considerable differences in retention across public primary schools, with some schools registering retention levels below 31% and others above 90%, and observed that schools with high absenteeism, weak parental follow-up and limited learning resources recorded lower progression and completion rates. Similarly, Kipkemboi (2021) reported gradual declines in enrolment between lower and upper primary in several Kenyan public schools and linked low retention to absenteeism, household economic challenges and weak school support systems. However, these studies relied largely on enrolment records and head teachers' reports, with limited engagement of parents and learners.

In Uganda, Mugume (2024), using administrative data from primary schools, reported that only about 31.9% of pupils who enrolled in Primary One completed Primary Seven within the expected cycle, with dropout and repetition being more common among learners from low-income and rural households. In Kotido District, Namukwaya and Kibirige (2014) reported that many pupils who enrolled in Primary One did not reach Primary Seven because of absenteeism, domestic work, early marriage and inadequate parental support, while Tumwehe (2024) in Rukiga District documented high attrition before completion of upper primary, particularly among learners from poor and remote households. However, these studies relied mainly on enrolment records and national statistics, presented findings at national level or for districts outside Northern Uganda, and did not clearly distinguish indicators such as attendance, completion, dropout and absenteeism.

The literature shows that retention is commonly measured through attendance, progression, completion and dropout, and that it remains low in many African and Ugandan schools. However, the available Ugandan evidence is either national (Mugume, 2024) or from districts

such as Kotido and Rukiga, and some of it is more than ten years old (contextual and time gap). Most studies also relied on enrolment records without the views of parents, teachers and head teachers (methodological gap). There is therefore no current evidence on the level of pupils' retention in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, which this study sought to establish.

2.4 Relationship between Parental Involvement and Pupils' Retention in Universal Primary Education Schools

Globally, studies show a positive relationship between parental involvement and retention and a negative relationship between parental involvement and dropout. In the United States, Barnard (2004) found a significant positive relationship between parent involvement in elementary school and educational attainment, as pupils whose parents were involved were less likely to drop out and more likely to complete school on time. Marlow and Rehman (2021), in a meta-analysis on family processes, found a significant negative relationship between positive family support and school absenteeism and dropout, while Gil et al. (2021) found that family support was significantly and positively associated with learners' behavioural engagement in school activities, which in turn protects them against dropout.

In Latin America, Berlinski et al. (2025), in an experiment in Chile, found that sending parents frequent text messages about their children's attendance, behaviour and grades improved attendance and increased the likelihood that pupils met the attendance requirements for grade promotion, implying a positive relationship between parent–school communication and retention. They explained that parents who received regular information from schools were able to address absenteeism and behavioural challenges early.

In Asia, Paul et al. (2021), using panel data from the India Human Development Survey, found a negative relationship between parental involvement and dropout: children whose parents did not attend PTA meetings had 1.15 times higher odds of dropping out (95% CI: 1.01–1.30), those whose parents did not discuss academic progress with teachers had 1.14 times higher odds (95% CI: 1.01–1.29), and lack of homework supervision was associated with 1.17 times higher odds (95% CI: 1.01–1.34). Similarly, Kumar et al. (2023) found that parental interaction with teachers and participation in school activities were associated with lower dropout, meaning that the higher the parental involvement, the lower the likelihood of dropout. Islam and Shapla (2021), using chi-square tests and multiple logistic regression, also found that weak parental participation in educational activities significantly increased absenteeism, while Fatimah et al. (2021) in Indonesia found that lack of parental attention and weak school–family cooperation contributed to increased dropout.

In East Africa, Kerei et al. (2024) in Kenya found that home-based and school-based parental involvement were positive predictors of pupils' access and retention in public primary schools, as pupils whose parents provided scholastic materials, supervised learning, attended meetings and participated in school programmes were more likely to progress and complete the primary cycle. Likewise, Mutune et al. (2024) reported a strong positive relationship between parental involvement and students' retention in Masinga Sub-County, Kenya ($r = 0.811$, $p < 0.05$), and found that head teachers' efforts to encourage parental participation improved attendance and continuity of learners in school.

In Uganda, Tumwehe (2024) reported a positive and statistically significant relationship between parental involvement and pupil retention in primary schools in Rukiga District ($p < 0.05$), with learners whose parents regularly monitored attendance, provided scholastic materials and communicated with teachers being more likely to remain in school. Ahereza (2024) similarly observed that parental participation in school meetings and activities improved continuity of schooling among lower primary learners, while Emurugat et al. (2022) noted that attendance of school meetings, communication with teachers and parents' financial contributions were associated with improved attendance and progression of learners in Busoga region. However, these Ugandan studies were conducted outside Northern Uganda and mostly used either quantitative or qualitative approaches alone.

The reviewed studies consistently show a positive relationship between parental involvement and retention and a negative relationship between parental involvement and dropout and absenteeism. However, most studies examined single forms of involvement, such as communication (Berlinski et al., 2025) or attendance of PTA meetings (Paul et al., 2021), rather than the combined effect of the different forms (empirical gap); few considered how socio-economic status, government policy and school environment moderate the relationship (theoretical gap); none was conducted in Kitgum District (contextual gap); and few combined statistical analysis with qualitative explanations (methodological gap). The present study addressed these gaps by examining the relationship between the four forms of parental involvement and pupils' retention, while considering the moderating variables, in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county using a convergent mixed methods design.

The literature reviewed shows that parental involvement takes the form of home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent–teacher communication and provision of scholastic materials (Epstein, 1995; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Kerei et al., 2024); that retention is measured through attendance, completion, dropout and absenteeism and remains low in many African and Ugandan schools (Mugume, 2024; Mwizerwa & Hesbon, 2024); and

that parental involvement is positively related to retention and negatively related to dropout and absenteeism (Marlow & Rehman, 2021; Paul et al., 2021; Tumwehe, 2024).

Four categories of gaps emerge from the review. Theoretically, Tinto's and Epstein's models were developed in higher education and American schools respectively, and their joint application to rural UPE schools in a post-conflict district has not been tested. Contextually, most studies were conducted in the United States, Europe, Asia, Kenya, Rwanda and Ugandan districts outside Northern Uganda, and none in Kitgum District or Mucwini Sub-county. Empirically, many studies examined parental involvement in relation to academic achievement rather than retention, or examined single forms of involvement, and some Ugandan evidence, such as that of Namukwaya and Kibirige (2014), is more than ten years old. Methodologically, most studies relied on either questionnaires, enrolment records or children's views, with limited triangulation through interviews. The present study addressed these gaps by examining the forms of parental involvement, the level of pupils' retention and the relationship between them in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county using a convergent mixed methods design.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods and procedures that were used in the study. It covers the research orientation, research design, area of study, study population, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection methods and instruments, data collection procedure, validity and reliability, data analysis, ethical considerations, limitations, delimitations and dissemination plan.

3.1 Research Orientation

This study adopted a mixed methods research approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to achieve a comprehensive understanding of parental involvement and pupils' retention in primary schools in Kitgum District. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), mixed methods research enabled the integration of numerical data and narrative explanations, providing a more complete understanding of research problems than either approach alone. Similarly, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) argued that combining qualitative and quantitative approaches enhanced the depth, validity, and interpretation of educational research findings.

The quantitative approach was used to generate numerical data on levels of parental involvement and pupils' retention indicators such as attendance, progression, and completion rates. According to Apuke (2017), quantitative research emphasized numerical measurement, statistical analysis, and objective explanation of relationships between variables.

The qualitative approach was used to explore experiences, perceptions, and contextual explanations from key stakeholders such as head teachers and School Management Committee members. This helped explain underlying reasons for retention patterns that could not be captured through numerical data alone.

The choice of mixed methods was appropriate because parental involvement and pupils' retention were complex social phenomena influenced by both measurable factors (attendance, progression) and contextual realities (home environment, poverty, and school support systems) (Molina-Azorín, 2016).

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed methods design as described by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently,

analysed separately and merged during interpretation to provide a more complete understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

The design enabled the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently within the same phase of the study. The findings were then interpreted to determine areas of convergence and complementarity. This design was considered appropriate because it provided a comprehensive understanding of the research problem by combining numerical evidence with participants' experiences and perspectives, thereby enhancing the validity and credibility of the study findings. This design also allowed the researcher to assess the current level of parental involvement and pupils' retention in primary schools without manipulating variables. It was also efficient in terms of time and cost, and it allowed comparison of responses across different respondent categories (Bryman, 2016).

3.3 Area of Study

The study was conducted in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District, in the Acholi sub-region of Northern Uganda. Kitgum District headquarters are located in Kitgum Municipality, approximately 452 kilometres north of Kampala. Mucwini Sub-county is one of the rural sub-counties of the district, and most households depend on subsistence agriculture and small-scale trade for their livelihoods.

Mucwini Sub-county was selected because it is a post-conflict rural sub-county that has experienced persistent challenges of irregular attendance, dropout and low completion in UPE schools, worsened by poverty, limited parental engagement and because no previous study on parental involvement and pupils' retention had been conducted there. Studies in Northern Uganda indicate that the effects of weakened parental engagement and school resources influence pupils' retention (UNICEF, 2021).

3.4 Study Population

The study population referred to all individuals who had relevant information regarding parental involvement and pupils' retention in primary schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District. This population formed the broader group from which the study findings were generalized.

The study population included parents/guardians of pupils, head teachers, teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) members, pupils (upper primary level), and selected education stakeholders at sub-county and district levels. These categories were appropriate because they were directly or indirectly involved in the education process and influenced pupils' attendance, progression, and completion of primary education. According to Kitgum District Education Report, (2024), Kitgum District had an estimated population of approximately 231,800 people.

Within this population, education stakeholders and school communities formed a key subgroup that directly participated in primary education service delivery and oversight.

3.5 Target Population

The target population referred to all individuals who possessed relevant and reliable information on parental involvement and pupils' retention in primary schools in Mucwini sub-county, Kitgum District. The study targeted the following categories: Head teachers of selected UPE primary schools, Teachers in selected primary schools, Parents/guardians of pupils in selected primary schools, School Management Committee (SMC) members, and Pupils in upper primary (Primary 5–Primary 7). The five head teachers of the selected schools comprised three females and two males.

These groups were selected because they directly experienced or influenced school participation and retention outcomes. Head teachers and teachers provided institutional data on attendance, progression, and school–parent interaction. Parents/guardians provided information on home-based involvement such as supervision, provision of scholastic materials, and communication with schools. SMC members provided governance and oversight perspectives, while pupils provided lived experiences related to attendance, support, and schooling continuity. The inclusion of multiple categories aligned with Epstein's (1995) model, which stated that learners' educational outcomes were influenced through the interaction of home, school, and community systems.

3.5.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Respondents were included if they were parents or guardians of pupils enrolled in the five selected UPE schools, teachers serving in the selected schools during the study period, pupils in Primary Five to Primary Seven, head teachers, SMC members serving during the study period, or sub-county and district education officers (including school inspectors) responsible for the selected schools. Respondents were excluded if they were not available during the data collection period, declined to give consent, or were pupils below Primary Five, who were considered too young to give reliable information on retention. Respondents who took part in the pilot study were also excluded from the main study.

3.6 Sample size determination and sampling procedure

3.6.1 Sample size determination

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula, which was appropriate for studies with a known population size and a 95% confidence level.

The formula was expressed as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = margin of error (0.05)

Using an estimated accessible population of 26,433 respondents (Kitgum District Education Report, 2024):

$$n = \frac{26433}{1 + 26433(0.05^2)}$$

This yielded a sample size of approximately 395 respondents.

However, to ensure proportional representation and account for non-response, the sample was adjusted to approximately 400 respondents.

3.6.2 Sampling procedure

A multi-stage sampling procedure, combining probability and non-probability techniques, was used. In the first stage, five (5) UPE primary schools in Mucwini Sub-county were selected purposively based on their relevance to the study objectives, accessibility, and representation of both rural and trading-centre settings. In the second stage, respondents in each school were grouped into strata according to their roles, namely parents/guardians, teachers, pupils (P5–P7), head teachers and SMC members, and the sample for each stratum was allocated proportionately to the size of each school. In the third stage, simple random sampling was used to select parents/guardians, teachers and pupils within each stratum: the researcher obtained lists of parents from the school PTA registers, teachers from the staff lists and pupils from the P5–P7 class registers, assigned a number to each name, wrote the numbers on pieces of paper and picked them at random (lottery method) until the required number for each school was reached. Finally, all five head teachers were included through census because they were few and were the custodians of school records, while SMC members and education officers were selected purposively based on their administrative experience and knowledge of parental involvement practices (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Sample distribution framework

Category	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Parents/Guardians	250	Simple Random Sampling
Teachers	100	Simple Random/Stratified Sampling
Pupils (P5–P7)	30	Simple Random Sampling
Head teachers	5	Census
SMC members	10	Purposive Sampling
Education officers	5	Purposive Sampling
Total	**400**	

3.7 Data Collection Methods

This study adopted a mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. This approach was appropriate because it allowed triangulation of findings, improved validity, and provided a more comprehensive understanding of how parental involvement influenced pupils' retention in primary schools (Apuke, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.7.1 Survey Method

A survey is a method of collecting data by asking a sample of respondents the same set of standardised questions in order to describe the characteristics, opinions or practices of a population (Creswell, 2014). The survey method is different from a questionnaire in that the survey is the overall strategy of data collection, while the questionnaire is the instrument (tool) used to collect the data under that strategy (Kothari, 2004). In this study, the survey method was used to collect numerical data from parents/guardians, teachers and pupils because it allowed collection of standardised responses from a large number of respondents within a short time, making it suitable for statistical analysis of relationships between variables.

The survey measured the indicators in the conceptual framework (Figure 1.1), namely home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent–teacher communication and provision of scholastic materials (independent variable); regular attendance, completion rate, dropout rate and absenteeism (dependent variable); and socio-economic status, government policy and school environment (moderating variables).

3.7.2 Interview Method

In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants, namely head teachers, SMC members and education officers (including school inspectors). This method was appropriate because it allowed participants to provide detailed explanations, experiences and contextual understanding that could not be captured through structured questionnaires (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Interviews helped explore: Causes of low or high retention, Role of parents in supporting schooling, and School-level challenges affecting retention.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) with parents/guardians or teachers were not used because the views of parents and teachers were captured through the questionnaire, which was read and explained to parents with limited literacy, while the key informants provided the institutional explanations needed to triangulate the survey findings. In addition, group discussions on sensitive household issues such as poverty and child labour could have led to socially desirable responses or dominance by a few participants.

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

3.8.1 Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire (Appendix II) was used to collect quantitative data from parents/guardians, teachers and pupils. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on the study objectives, the conceptual framework and items from related studies on parental involvement (Epstein, 1995; Mocho et al., 2025). It had four sections: Section A captured the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (gender, age, role, education level and number of children in primary school); Section B measured parental involvement through 16 items on home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent–teacher communication and provision of scholastic materials; Section C measured the level of pupils' retention through 16 items on regular attendance, completion rate, dropout and absenteeism; and Section D measured the moderating variables through 12 items on socio-economic status, government policy and school environment. Items in Sections B to D were rated on a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Not Sure (NS), 4 = Agree (A) and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA). The Likert scale was appropriate because it enabled measurement of attitudes, perceptions and behaviours in a standardised and quantifiable manner (Joshi et al., 2015).

3.8.2 Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide (Appendix III) was used to collect qualitative data from head teachers, SMC members and education officers. It contained seven open-ended questions,

which allowed probing for deeper responses, on the influence of parental involvement on attendance and continuation in school, the forms of parental involvement practised, how parents support learning at home and at school, the challenges limiting parental involvement, the effect of parental involvement on dropout and completion, the role of the school in strengthening parental involvement, and measures to improve parental involvement and retention.

The semi-structured format was appropriate because it provided flexibility while maintaining focus on the study objectives (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process followed a systematic sequence to ensure accuracy, reliability, and ethical compliance. Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Faculty of Education and Humanities, Gulu University, which was used to seek permission from the District Education Office and the selected UPE primary schools in Kitgum District. After obtaining permission, the researcher conducted preliminary visits to the selected five (5) UPE primary schools to familiarize with the environment, identify respondents, and schedule appropriate times for data collection. This also helped to coordinate with school administrators to minimize disruption of school activities.

Before administering the instruments, the researcher briefed all participants on the purpose of the study, assured them of confidentiality, and obtained informed consent. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw at any stage without any penalty.

For the quantitative component, structured questionnaires were administered to parents/guardians, teachers and pupils (P5–P7). Teachers and literate parents completed the questionnaires on their own (self-administered), while for parents with limited literacy and for pupils, the researcher used a guided administration approach in which each item was read and explained in the local language (Acholi) in a neutral manner and the response was recorded exactly as given by the respondent.

For the qualitative component, key informant interviews were conducted with head teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) members, and selected education officers. The interviews were conducted face-to-face using a semi-structured interview guide. With permission from participants, responses were recorded using audio devices and complemented with note-taking to ensure completeness of data.

The researcher ensured that data collection was conducted in a professional and respectful manner, maintaining neutrality and avoiding influencing respondents' answers. Each school

was visited according to a pre-arranged schedule, and data collection proceeded until all required questionnaires were completed and all planned interviews were conducted.

After data collection, all questionnaires were checked for completeness and consistency, while interview recordings were safely stored for transcription and analysis. This process ensured that high-quality data was obtained for both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

3.10 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

3.10.1 Validity

Validity is the extent to which the instruments measure what they are intended to measure. Content validity was established by subjecting the questionnaire and interview guide to expert review by 3 experts.

Experts assessed: Relevance of questions to research objectives, Clarity and language appropriateness, and Coverage of all study variables.

CVI was determined from CVI = (items rated relevant)/(Total numbers of items).

Table 3.2: Content Validity Index (CVI) of the Research Instrument

Section	Number of Items	Items Rated Relevant	CVI
Parental Involvement	16	15	0.94
Pupils' Retention	16	15	0.94
Moderating Variables	12	11	0.92
Overall	**44**	**41**	**0.93**

Source: Expert validation (2026)

The overall Content Validity Index of 0.93 exceeded the recommended minimum threshold of 0.80, indicating that the questionnaire possessed satisfactory content validity. The experts confirmed that the items were relevant to the study objectives, clearly worded, and adequately covered the variables of parental involvement, pupils' retention, and moderating factors.

3.10.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the research instruments in producing similar results over repeated use. It was established using the data from the pilot study described in Section 3.10.3.

Quantitative reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, where: $\alpha \geq 0.70$ was considered acceptable reliability, and $\alpha < 0.70$ required revision of the instrument

Table 3.3: Reliability Statistics of the Research Instrument

Study Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Parental Involvement	16	0.890
Pupils' Retention	16	0.748
Moderating Variables	12	0.716
Overall Instrument	**44**	**0.874**

As shown in Table 3.3, the overall questionnaire attained a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.874, indicating good internal consistency. The reliability coefficients for the individual study variables ranged from 0.716 to 0.890, all of which exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 recommended for social science research. Specifically, the parental involvement scale had the highest reliability coefficient (α = 0.890), followed by the pupils' retention scale (α = 0.748) and the moderating variables scale (α = 0.716). Therefore, the instrument was considered sufficiently reliable for data collection.

3.10.3 Pilot Study

Before the main data collection, the questionnaire and interview guide were pre-tested in a pilot study involving 10 respondents (parents/guardians, teachers and pupils). The pilot was used to check the clarity, wording, sequence and time required to complete the instruments, and its data were used to compute the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients in Table 3.3.

3.11 Data Analysis Methods

After data collection, questionnaires were checked for completeness, consistency, and accuracy before coding. Any incomplete or inconsistent responses were verified or excluded during analysis.

3.11.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were coded, entered and analysed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) were used to summarise respondents' characteristics and the study variables. Mean scores were interpreted using the following scale: 1.00–1.80 = very low; 1.81–2.60 = low; 2.61–3.40 = moderate; 3.41–4.20 = high; and 4.21–5.00 = very high.

Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to determine the relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention and to test the null hypothesis (H_0), which was rejected when the p-value was less than 0.05. The strength of the correlation coefficient (r) was interpreted following Cohen (1988), where r = 0.10–0.29 is weak, 0.30–0.49 is moderate and 0.50–1.00 is

strong. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to establish the extent to which the four forms of parental involvement predicted pupils' retention (Model 1) and how the prediction changed when the moderating variables were added (Model 2). The adjusted R^2 was used to interpret the proportion of variation explained, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the overall significance of each model, and the standardised beta coefficients were used to compare the relative contribution of each predictor. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$. Table 3.4 summarises how each objective was analysed.

Table 3.4: Summary of data analysis per objective

Objective	Data source	Method of analysis
1. To establish the forms of parental involvement	Questionnaire (Section B); interviews	Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations; thematic analysis
2. To determine the level of pupils' retention	Questionnaire (Section C); interviews	Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations; thematic analysis
3. To examine the relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention	Questionnaire (Sections B, C and D); interviews	Pearson correlation (hypothesis test); hierarchical multiple regression and ANOVA; thematic analysis

Source: Researcher (2026)

3.11.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews was analyzed using thematic content analysis. The process involved: Transcription of interview recordings, Coding of responses into categories, Identification of emerging themes, Interpretation of patterns in relation to research objectives. Direct quotations were used to support key themes and enhance interpretation of findings. Respondents were identified by codes, namely HT (head teacher), SMC (SMC member), EO (education officer) and SI (school inspector), followed by a number (for example, HT1).

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were observed throughout the study to protect respondents and the integrity of the research process. An introductory letter was obtained from the Faculty of Education and Humanities, Gulu University (Appendix IV), and permission was sought from the District Education Officer, Kitgum District, and the head teachers of the selected schools before data collection began. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and signed or thumb-printed an informed consent form (Appendix I); for pupils, permission was obtained

from the head teachers and the pupils' assent was sought before participation. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by not recording names on the instruments and by using codes such as HT1 and SMC1 in reporting. To ensure that no physical, emotional or social harm was caused to participants (non-maleficence), questionnaires and interviews were administered at times and places convenient to respondents, questions on household income were asked in general terms, interviews were held in private, and the data were stored on a password-protected computer accessible only to the researcher. Finally, all sources of information were acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.

3.13 Limitations of the Study

The study had some limitations related to its methods and data, which were addressed as follows. First, some respondents did not complete all the questionnaire items; this was minimised by checking each questionnaire for completeness at the point of collection and requesting respondents to fill any missed items. Secondly, because the study relied on self-reported perceptions, some respondents could have given socially desirable answers; this was minimised by assuring respondents of confidentiality and anonymity and by triangulating questionnaire responses with interview data. Thirdly, some parents required translation or explanation of the questionnaire items, which could have affected interpretation; this was addressed by reading the items in Acholi in a neutral and consistent manner. Lastly, retention was measured largely through respondents' perceptions rather than cohort records of individual pupils, which limits the precision of the retention estimates; this was mitigated by supplementing the survey with key informants' accounts of school records.

3.14 Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to five UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District; to parental involvement and pupils' retention as the main variables, with socio-economic status, government policy and school environment as moderating variables; and to parents/guardians, teachers, pupils, head teachers, SMC members and education officers as respondents. These delimitations ensured focus and manageability within the available time and resources.

3.15 Dissemination Plan

The findings of this study will be disseminated to ensure that they contribute to improving parental involvement and pupils' retention in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county and beyond. Copies of the final dissertation will be submitted to the Department of Education Management, the Faculty of Education and Humanities, the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training and the library of Gulu University. A summary of the findings and recommendations will be

shared with the Kitgum District Education Office, the leadership of Mucwini Sub-county, and the head teachers, SMCs and PTAs of the participating schools during school and community meetings. In addition, the findings will be presented at academic conferences and submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal to reach researchers and policy makers.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyses and interprets the data collected from the field, organised according to the three research objectives. It covers the response rate, the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, and the findings on the forms of parental involvement (objective one), the level of pupils' retention (objective two) and the relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention (objective three). Quantitative data are presented in tables of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, interpreted using the mean scale in Section 3.11.1, while qualitative data are presented as themes supported by direct quotations. In the quotations, HT refers to head teacher, SMC to School Management Committee member, EO to education officer and SI to school inspector.

4.1 Response Rate

Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, all 400 were returned fully completed, giving a response rate of 100%, while 8 of the 10 planned interviews were conducted, giving a response rate of 80%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 70% and above is very good for analysis and reporting.

4.2 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presented the background information of the respondents who participated in the study. The characteristics included gender, age, level of education, role in the school community, and years of experience. This information was essential in establishing the profile of the respondents and contextualizing their responses to the study objectives.

Table 4.1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (N = 400)

Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	236	59.0
	Female	164	41.0
Age (Years)	18 – 34	92	23.0
	35 – 44	144	36.0
	45 – 54	112	28.0
	55 and above	52	13.0
Role / Category	Parents/Guardians	260	65.0
	Teachers	100	25.0
	Pupils (P5–P7)	30	7.5
	SMC members	10	2.5
Highest Education Level	Primary	112	28.0
	Secondary	174	43.5
	Diploma	82	20.5
	Degree	32	8.0
Number of Children in Primary	1 – 2 children	41	10.3
	3 – 4 children	112	28.0
	5 children and above	247	61.7

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 4.1 show that the majority of the respondents were male (59.0%), while females constituted 41.0%. This indicates that males were more represented in the study than females, although both genders participated sufficiently to provide diverse views regarding parental involvement and pupils' retention.

Regarding age, the largest proportion of respondents (36.0%) were aged between 35 and 44 years, followed by those aged 45–54 years (28.0%), while respondents aged 18–34 years accounted for 23.0%. The least represented age category comprised respondents aged 55 years and above (13.0%). These findings imply that most respondents were mature adults who were actively involved in parenting, school management, or teaching and therefore possessed adequate experience to provide reliable information on pupils' retention.

The results further indicate that parents and guardians constituted the majority of respondents (65.0%), followed by teachers (25.0%), while pupils from Primary Five to Primary Seven represented 7.5% and school management members constituted only 2.5%. This distribution suggests that the study largely captured the perceptions of parents, who are the primary stakeholders in children's education, while also incorporating views from teachers, pupils, and school managers to enrich the findings through multiple perspectives. With regard to educational attainment, most respondents had completed secondary education (43.5%),

followed by primary education (28.0%), diploma education (20.5%), and degree education (8.0%). This implies that the majority of respondents possessed basic formal education, which was considered adequate for understanding and responding to issues concerning parental involvement and pupils' retention.

The findings also revealed that most respondents (61.7%) had five or more children enrolled in primary school, while 28.0% had between three and four children, and only 10.3% had one to two children. The large household sizes observed among most respondents may have implications for the amount of parental attention, supervision, and educational support that individual pupils receive, thereby influencing parental involvement practices and ultimately affecting pupils' retention in school. These socio-demographic characteristics are relevant to the study variables. The large number of children per household and the modest education levels of many parents suggest that parents may have limited time, resources and literacy to support learning at home, which may explain the lower level of home-based involvement reported in Section 4.3.1. The dominance of parents in the sample also means that the findings largely reflect the views of those directly responsible for providing scholastic materials and supervision, while the inclusion of teachers, pupils and SMC members allowed the findings to be triangulated.

4.3 Forms of Parental Involvement in UPE Schools

The first research question sought to establish the forms of parental involvement in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county. The forms examined were home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent–teacher communication and provision of scholastic materials, as presented in Tables 4.2 to 4.5.

4.3.1 Home-based parental involvement

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics for home-based parental involvement

Home-Based Involvement	SD (%)	D (%)	SD+D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	A+SA (%)	Mean	Std Dev.
Parents regularly supervise pupils' homeworkt home.	7.7	23.1	30.8	20.5	30.8	17.9	48.7	3.28	1.22
Parents ensure pupils have a fixed time for study at home.	12.8	17.9	30.7	25.6	30.8	12.8	43.6	3.13	1.23
Parents provide guidance on academic work done at home.	2.6	18.4	21.0	13.2	47.4	18.4	65.8	3.61	1.06
Parents monitor pupils' attendance to school regularly.	2.6	21.1	23.7	21.1	34.2	21.1	55.3	3.50	1.11
Average	**6.4**	**20.1**	**26.6**	**20.1**	**35.8**	**17.6**	**53.4**	**3.38**	**1.16**

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Not Sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, Std Deviation

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 4.2 examined the extent to which parents were involved in supporting pupils' learning within the home environment. Overall, respondents expressed a moderate level of agreement with the statements on home-based parental involvement, as reflected by an average agreement of 53.4%, disagreement of 26.6%, a mean score of 3.38 and a standard deviation of 1.16. This suggests that although many parents participated in supporting learning at home, home-based involvement was not consistently practiced across all households.

The findings revealed that 48.7% of the respondents expressed agreement, while 30.8% expressed disagreement that parents regularly supervised pupils' homework at home. A further 20.5% were not sure. The statement obtained a mean score of 3.28 and a standard deviation of 1.22, indicating moderate parental supervision of homework. Similarly, 43.6% of the respondents agreed that parents ensured pupils had a fixed time for study at home, whereas 30.7% disagreed and 25.6% remained neutral. This statement recorded the lowest mean score of 3.13 with a standard deviation of 1.23, suggesting that establishing structured study schedules at home was the least practiced aspect of parental involvement.

The results further showed that 65.8% of respondents agreed that parents provided guidance on academic work done at home, compared to 21.0% who disagreed, while 13.2% were undecided. This item recorded a relatively high mean score of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 1.06, implying that many parents offered academic guidance to their children despite limitations in other home-based support practices.

Regarding monitoring school attendance, 55.3% of respondents agreed that parents regularly monitored pupils' attendance to school, whereas 23.7% disagreed and 21.1% were not sure. The statement achieved a mean score of 3.50 with a standard deviation of 1.11, indicating that monitoring attendance was more common than supervising homework or maintaining regular study schedules.

The interview findings revealed that home-based parental involvement was one of the most important ways through which parents contributed to pupils' education and retention. Respondents explained that effective parental involvement at home extended beyond providing basic needs to include supervising homework, guiding children academically, counselling them on good behaviour, monitoring school attendance and creating a favourable environment for learning. These practices were perceived to motivate pupils to attend school regularly and complete their primary education. One Head Teacher explained that parents who actively participate in their children's learning at home tend to produce pupils with better attendance and academic commitment. He noted that:

"Parents who take time to check homework, ask children what they learnt in class and make sure they read every evening help those children to remain interested in school. Even when the child performs poorly, such parents encourage them instead of leaving everything to the teachers. We have realised that children whose parents closely follow their learning rarely stay away from school without genuine reasons." (HT1)

Another Head Teacher said that parental guidance at home should not only focus on academics but also on discipline and moral development. According to the Headteacher:

"Education starts from home before the child reaches school. Parents are expected to guide children, counsel them, teach them discipline and make sure they wake up early and prepare for school every day. When this responsibility is neglected, many children lose interest in school and some finally drop out." (HT2)

Similarly, a School Inspector observed that parental involvement at home creates a strong partnership between families and schools, making it easier to monitor pupils' progress. The respondent stated that:

"Good parents always know what their children are studying. They check exercise books, discuss report cards, communicate with teachers whenever there is a problem and provide time and space for revision at home. Such involvement improves attendance and encourages children to complete the primary cycle because they know their education is valued." (SI1)

An Education Officer also noted that many parents who intentionally support learning at home contribute positively to retention. The respondent remarked that:

"Parents should not wait for teachers alone to educate their children. They should monitor attendance, provide guidance, encourage regular reading, and ensure children complete homework. When parents become part of the learning process, absenteeism reduces and pupils remain committed to school." (EO1)

The interview findings demonstrate that respondents regarded home-based parental involvement as an essential foundation for pupils' retention. They consistently indicated that supervision of homework, guidance and counselling, monitoring attendance and creating an enabling learning environment at home encourage pupils to attend school regularly and remain in school until completion.

4.3.2 School-based parental involvement

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics for school-based parental involvement

School-Based Involvement	SD (%)	D (%)	SD+D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	A+SA (%)	Mean	Std Dev.
Parents attend school meetings and PTA gatherings regularly.	0.0	12.8	12.8	5.1	59.0	23.1	82.1	3.92	0.89
Parents participate in school activities such as meetings and events.	2.6	2.6	5.2	13.2	71.1	10.5	81.6	3.84	0.74
Parents contribute to school development programmes.	2.7	10.8	13.5	10.8	59.5	16.2	75.7	3.76	0.94
Parents visit school to follow up pupils' progress.	5.3	18.4	23.7	18.4	44.7	13.2	57.9	3.42	1.09
Average	**2.7**	**11.2**	**13.8**	**11.9**	**58.6**	**15.8**	**74.3**	**3.74**	**0.92**

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Not Sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, Std Deviation

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 4.3 assessed the extent to which parents participated in school-related activities. Overall, respondents expressed a high level of agreement, with an average agreement of 74.3%, disagreement of 13.8%, a mean score of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 0.92. These findings suggest that school-based parental involvement was widely practiced in the selected primary schools.

The findings revealed that 82.1% of respondents agreed that parents regularly attended school meetings and PTA gatherings, while only 12.8% disagreed and 5.1% were undecided. This statement obtained a mean score of 3.92 with a standard deviation of 0.89, indicating that attendance at school meetings was one of the strongest forms of parental involvement. Similarly, 81.6% of respondents agreed that parents participated in school activities such as meetings and events, whereas only 5.2% disagreed and 13.2% were neutral. The statement recorded a mean score of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.74, demonstrating a high level of consistency in respondents' views.

The results further showed that 75.7% of respondents agreed that parents contributed to school development programmes, while 13.5% expressed disagreement and 10.8% were not sure. This statement attained a mean score of 3.76 with a standard deviation of 0.94, suggesting that many parents supported school improvement initiatives.

Regarding parents visiting schools to follow up pupils' progress, 57.9% of respondents expressed agreement compared to 23.7% who disagreed, while 18.4% remained neutral. This item recorded the lowest mean score within the dimension (3.42) and a standard deviation of 1.09, indicating that although follow-up visits were fairly common, they were less frequent than attendance at meetings and participation in school activities.

The interview findings revealed that parents also contribute to pupils' retention through active participation in school-based activities. Respondents indicated that parents attend school meetings, participate in Parent–Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, contribute to school development projects, monitor pupils' progress at school and participate in school programmes. Such involvement strengthens the relationship between the school and parents, enabling schools to address pupils' academic and behavioural challenges before they result in absenteeism or dropout. One Head Teacher explained that parental participation in school activities creates a sense of shared responsibility for learners' education. The respondent stated that:

> *"When parents attend meetings, they understand the challenges affecting the school and their children. During meetings we discuss attendance, discipline, examination performance and even the welfare of learners. Parents who attend these meetings normally cooperate with teachers and quickly respond whenever there is a problem affecting their child. This has helped many learners remain in school until they complete Primary Seven." (HT3)*

Another Head Teacher emphasized that parents contribute not only financially but also through voluntary community work aimed at improving the school environment. The respondent explained that:

> *"Many parents support the school by participating in communal work such as digging latrines, clearing the compound, moulding bricks and contributing towards construction of teachers' houses and classrooms. When parents take ownership of school development, they also become more interested in monitoring the progress of their children. This improves attendance because learners know both the school and their parents are working together." (HT4)*

An SMC member also highlighted the importance of involving parents in school decision-making. According to the respondent:

> *"Parents should not only come to school when there is a problem. They should participate in planning school activities, discuss ISSUES affecting learners and support decisions made during PTA and SMC meetings. When parents feel that they are part of the school, they become committed to supporting their children's education." (SMC1)*

Similarly, the School Inspector observed that schools with active parental participation generally record better retention than those where parents rarely engage with school programmes. The respondent noted that:

"Schools that regularly invite parents for meetings, assemblies and school activities usually have fewer cases of absenteeism and dropout. Parents become aware of the progress of their children and they cooperate with teachers to solve problems before they become serious." (SI1)

The interview findings indicate that school-based parental involvement strengthens collaboration between parents and schools, improves monitoring of pupils' welfare and academic progress, and contributes to better attendance, progression and completion of primary education.

4.3.3 Parent–teacher communication

Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics for parent–teacher communication

Parent–Teacher Communication	SD (%)	D (%)	SD+D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	A+SA (%)	Mean	Std Dev.
Parents regularly communicate with teachers about pupils' progress.	2.6	10.5	13.1	21.1	52.6	13.2	65.8	3.63	0.93
Teachers inform parents about pupils' attendance and behaviour.	2.6	5.1	7.7	12.8	43.6	35.9	79.5	4.05	0.96
Parents respond promptly to communication from the school.	2.6	18.4	21.0	26.3	39.5	13.2	52.7	3.42	1.02
There is regular sharing of academic information between parents and teachers.	2.6	15.8	18.4	15.8	50.0	15.8	65.8	3.61	1.01
Average	**2.6**	**12.5**	**15.1**	**19.0**	**46.4**	**19.5**	**65.9**	**3.68**	**0.98**

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Not Sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, Std Deviation

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 4.4 examined communication between parents and teachers regarding pupils' education. Overall, respondents reported a relatively high level of communication, with an average agreement of 65.9%, disagreement of 15.1%, a mean score of 3.68 and a standard deviation of 0.98. This indicates that communication between schools and parents was generally effective.

The findings showed that 65.8% of respondents agreed that parents regularly communicated with teachers regarding pupils' academic progress, while 13.1% disagreed and 21.1% were not sure. The statement obtained a mean score of 3.63 with a standard deviation of 0.93.

The highest level of agreement was recorded on the statement that teachers informed parents about pupils' attendance and behaviour, where 79.5% agreed, 7.7% disagreed and 12.8% remained neutral. The statement attained the highest mean score of 4.05 with a standard deviation of 0.96, indicating that schools were highly proactive in communicating with parents.

The findings further revealed that 52.7% of respondents agreed that parents responded promptly to communication from the school, while 21.0% disagreed and 26.3% were not sure. This statement recorded the lowest mean score of 3.42 with a standard deviation of 1.02, suggesting that parental responsiveness was comparatively weaker than schools' efforts to initiate communication. Similarly, 65.8% of respondents agreed that there was regular sharing of academic information between parents and teachers, whereas 18.4% disagreed and 15.8% were undecided. The statement obtained a mean score of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 1.01, indicating that information sharing between schools and parents occurred fairly regularly.

The interview findings further revealed that effective communication between parents and teachers is an important form of parental involvement that promotes pupils' retention. Respondents explained that regular communication enables parents to monitor learners' attendance, discipline and academic performance while allowing teachers to inform parents promptly whenever challenges arise. One Education Officer explained that continuous communication strengthens accountability between parents and schools. The respondent stated that:

> *"Parents should not wait until the end of the term to know how their children are performing. Teachers should regularly communicate with parents through meetings, phone calls and report cards. Once parents are informed early, they can work together with teachers to solve problems like absenteeism, poor performance or indiscipline before the child drops out." (EO1)*

A Head Teacher also emphasized that communication enables timely intervention whenever pupils begin missing school. According to the respondent:

> *"Whenever we realise a learner has missed school for several days, we immediately contact the parents or invite them to school. In many cases, after discussing with the parents, the learner returns to school. If communication delays, some children remain at home for a long time and eventually drop out." (HT2)*

An SMC member observed that good communication creates trust between schools and parents. The respondent explained that:

> *"Parents appreciate schools that openly share information about their children's progress. When schools communicate regularly, parents become confident that teachers are committed to educating their children. This trust encourages parents to continue supporting school programmes and monitoring their children's education." (SMC2)*

Similarly, the School Inspector noted that communication should not only occur when problems arise but should be maintained throughout the school year. The respondent remarked that:

> *"Good schools communicate with parents regularly even when learners are performing well. Parents should receive updates about attendance, behaviour and academic progress throughout the term. This continuous communication builds strong cooperation between homes and schools and helps learners remain focused on education." (SI1)*

This demonstrates that regular parent–teacher communication facilitates early identification of learners' challenges, strengthens cooperation between parents and schools and promotes improved attendance, progression and retention.

4.3.4 Parental involvement through provision of scholastic materials by parents

Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics for provision of scholastic materials by parents

Provision of Scholastic Materials	SD (%)	D (%)	SD+D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	A+SA (%)	Mean	Std Dev.
Parents provide all required school materials for their children.	0.0	17.9	17.9	10.3	48.7	23.1	71.8	3.77	1.00
Pupils attend school with necessary learning materials (books, pens).	0.0	12.8	12.8	23.1	51.3	12.8	64.1	3.64	0.86
Parents support payment for school requirements when needed.	2.6	13.2	15.8	10.5	55.3	18.4	73.7	3.74	0.99
Lack of scholastic materials affects pupils' school attendance.	2.6	0.0	2.6	13.2	42.1	42.1	84.2	4.21	0.86
Average	**1.3**	**11.0**	**12.3**	**14.3**	**49.4**	**24.1**	**73.5**	**3.84**	**0.93**

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Not Sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, Std Deviation

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 4.5 examined the extent to which parents provided scholastic materials required to support pupils' learning. Overall, respondents expressed a high level of agreement, with an average agreement of 73.5%, disagreement of 12.3%, a mean score of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.93. This indicates that provision of scholastic materials constituted one of the strongest forms of parental involvement.

The findings revealed that 71.8% of respondents agreed that parents provided all the required school materials for their children, while 17.9% disagreed and 10.3% were not sure. The statement obtained a mean score of 3.77 with a standard deviation of 1.00. Similarly, 64.1% of respondents agreed that pupils attended school with the necessary learning materials such as books and pens, whereas 12.8% disagreed and 23.1% remained neutral. This statement recorded a mean score of 3.64 with a standard deviation of 0.86.

The findings further showed that 73.7% of respondents agreed that parents supported payment for school requirements whenever necessary, while 15.8% disagreed and 10.5% were undecided. The statement attained a mean score of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 0.99, suggesting that many parents fulfilled their financial obligations towards their children's education.

The strongest level of agreement was observed on the statement that lack of scholastic materials affects pupils' school attendance, where 84.2% of respondents expressed agreement compared to only 2.6% who expressed disagreement, while 13.2% were not sure. This statement recorded the highest mean score of 4.21 with a standard deviation of 0.86, demonstrating strong consensus that adequate scholastic materials are essential for sustaining pupils' regular attendance and retention in school.

The interview findings also revealed that providing scholastic materials is one of the most visible forms of parental involvement influencing pupils' retention. Respondents explained that pupils require exercise books, pens, uniforms, mathematical sets, school bags and other learning materials to participate effectively in classroom activities. Failure by parents to provide these requirements often discourages pupils from attending school regularly. One Head Teacher explained that inadequate scholastic materials remain one of the major causes of absenteeism among learners. The respondent stated that:

> *"Some children stay at home simply because they have no exercise books, pens or even school uniforms. Others feel ashamed to attend class without the basic requirements. Whenever parents provide these materials in time, learners become confident, participate actively in class and rarely miss school." (HT1)*

Another Head Teacher emphasized that parents should also provide other necessities that support learning. The respondent observed that:

> *"Supporting education is not only about buying books. Parents should provide meals, clothing, medical care and a safe place where children can study. When children come to school hungry or sick, they cannot concentrate and many eventually lose interest in learning." (HT3)*

An Education Officer similarly noted that poverty remains one of the biggest barriers preventing parents from providing essential learning materials. According to the respondent:

> *"Many parents understand the importance of education, but because of poverty they fail to provide exercise books, pens, uniforms and other school requirements. As education officers, we continue sensitising communities that whatever little they have*

should first support the education of their children because it is an investment for the future." (EO1)

The School Inspector further explained that schools and communities should work together to help vulnerable learners who lack basic requirements. The respondent stated that:

"Schools alone cannot meet all the needs of learners. Parents, local leaders and the community should work together to ensure that every child has the basic materials needed for learning. When these requirements are available, attendance improves and learners are more likely to complete the primary education cycle." (SI1)

The interview findings indicate that provision of scholastic materials and other basic learning requirements plays a significant role in promoting pupils' retention. Respondents consistently agreed that adequate learning materials improve learners' confidence, participation and regular attendance, while inadequate provision contributes to absenteeism and increases the risk of school dropout.

4.4 Level of Pupils' Retention in UPE Schools

The second research question sought to determine the level of pupils' retention in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county. Retention was measured through regular attendance, completion rate, dropout and absenteeism, as presented in Tables 4.6 to 4.9. The data reflect trends observed between 2021 and 2025.

4.4.1 Regular attendance of pupils

Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics for regular attendance of pupils

Regular Attendance	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	SD+D (%)	A+SA (%)	Mean	Std Dev
Pupils attend school regularly without frequent absenteeism.	17.9	35.9	12.8	20.5	12.8	53.8	33.3	2.74	1.32
Most pupils attend school throughout the term.	18.4	23.7	18.4	23.7	15.8	42.1	39.5	2.95	1.35
Attendance improves when parents are involved in schooling.	2.6	5.3	0.0	34.2	57.9	7.9	92.1	4.40	0.93
Irregular attendance is common among pupils without parental support.	0.0	5.3	10.5	36.8	47.4	5.3	84.2	4.26	0.85
Average	**9.7**	**17.6**	**10.4**	**28.8**	**33.5**	**27.3**	**62.3**	**3.59**	**1.11**

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Not Sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, Std Deviation

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 4.6 examined respondents' views on pupils' regular attendance. The average mean score was 3.59 (high), with an average agreement of 62.3% and disagreement of 27.3%; however, this average was raised by the two statements on the role of

parents, while the two statements that directly measured pupils' attendance recorded moderate mean scores (2.74 and 2.95). This indicates that the actual level of regular attendance was moderate and that absenteeism remained a concern among some pupils.

The findings revealed that only 33.3% of the respondents expressed agreement that pupils attended school regularly without frequent absenteeism, while 53.8% expressed disagreement and 12.8% were neutral. This statement recorded the lowest mean score of 2.74 with a standard deviation of 1.32, suggesting that many pupils still experienced frequent absenteeism. Similarly, 39.5% of respondents agreed that most pupils attended school throughout the school term, whereas 42.1% expressed disagreement and 18.4% remained undecided. The statement obtained a mean score of 2.95 and a standard deviation of 1.35, indicating that continuous attendance throughout the term was not consistently achieved by all pupils.

However, an overwhelming majority (92.1%) agreed that attendance improves when parents are involved in schooling, while only 7.9% expressed disagreement. This statement attained a high mean score of 4.40 with a standard deviation of 0.93, demonstrating a strong consensus that parental involvement positively influences pupils' attendance. Likewise, 84.2% of respondents agreed that irregular attendance was common among pupils without parental support, compared to only 5.3% who disagreed, while 10.5% remained neutral. The statement recorded a mean score of 4.26 with a standard deviation of 0.85, further indicating that respondents strongly associated parental support with regular school attendance.

The interview findings revealed that respondents considered regular attendance as one of the strongest indicators of pupils' retention. They explained that pupils who attend school consistently are more likely to perform well academically, remain motivated and successfully complete the primary cycle. Respondents further noted that regular attendance is largely influenced by parental commitment to monitoring children's daily school attendance and providing the necessary support at home. One Head Teacher explained that parents who consistently monitor attendance rarely have children with persistent absenteeism. The respondent stated that:

> *"When parents wake children early, prepare them for school and make sure they report every day, attendance becomes very good. The problem starts when parents stop following up their children. Some learners leave home pretending to go to school but end up in trading centres or gardens. Parents who monitor attendance every day help us keep children in school throughout the term." (HT1)*

A School Inspector also observed that regular attendance depends on close cooperation between schools and parents. According to the respondent:

"Schools can only register attendance, but parents have the responsibility of ensuring children leave home and reach school on time. Where parents communicate with teachers and quickly respond whenever a child misses school, absenteeism reduces and learners continue with their education without interruption." (SI1)

Similarly, an Education Officer emphasized that attendance improves when parents appreciate the value of education and actively supervise their children's schooling. The respondent explained that:

"Parents should understand that learning is a daily process. Missing classes affects the child's performance and interest in school. Communities that value education usually have better attendance because parents encourage learners to report every day and follow up whenever they are absent." (EO1)

The interview findings indicate that regular attendance is largely sustained through active parental supervision, close collaboration between schools and parents, and continuous encouragement of learners to value education.

4.4.2 Pupils' completion rate

Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics for pupils' completion rate

Completion Rate	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	SD+D (%)	A+SA (%)	Mean	Std Dev
Most pupils progress from lower to upper primary classes.	2.6	15.8	2.6	52.6	26.4	18.4	79.0	3.84	1.49
Pupils are able to complete the primary cycle (P7).	2.6	13.2	18.4	47.4	18.4	15.8	65.8	3.66	1.24
Parental involvement increases pupils' chances of completing school.	0.0	2.6	0.0	36.8	60.5	2.6	97.3	4.55	0.65
Dropout rates are lower in schools with strong parental involvement.	8.1	5.4	0.0	32.4	54.1	13.5	86.5	4.19	1.29
Average	**3.3**	**9.3**	**5.3**	**42.3**	**39.8**	**12.6**	**82.1**	**4.06**	**1.17**

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Not Sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, Std Deviation

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 4.7 assessed respondents' perceptions regarding pupils' completion of the primary education cycle. Overall, respondents expressed a high level of agreement, with an average agreement of 82.1%, disagreement of 12.6%, a mean score of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 1.17. This indicates that respondents generally believed parental involvement contributes positively to pupils' completion of primary education.

The findings revealed that 79.0% of respondents agreed that most pupils progressed from lower to upper primary classes, while 18.4% expressed disagreement and 2.6% remained neutral. This statement obtained a mean score of 3.84 with a standard deviation of 1.49, indicating that progression through primary classes was generally satisfactory. Similarly, 65.8% of respondents expressed agreement that pupils were able to complete the primary cycle up to Primary Seven, whereas 15.8% expressed disagreement and 18.4% were undecided. The statement attained a mean score of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 1.24, suggesting that completion of the primary cycle was achieved by many pupils, although some challenges remained.

The highest level of agreement (97.3%) was recorded on the statement that parental involvement increases pupils' chances of completing school, while only 2.6% expressed disagreement. This statement obtained the highest mean score of 4.55 with a standard deviation of 0.65, demonstrating a very strong consensus regarding the importance of parental involvement in ensuring school completion. Furthermore, 86.5% of respondents agreed that dropout rates were lower in schools where parental involvement was strong, whereas 13.5% expressed disagreement. The statement recorded a mean score of 4.19 with a standard deviation of 1.29, suggesting that active parental participation contributes significantly towards reducing school dropout and promoting completion.

The interview findings revealed that respondents associated high completion rates with sustained parental involvement throughout the child's primary education. They explained that learners are more likely to complete Primary Seven when parents continuously support their education through guidance, monitoring academic progress and meeting essential school requirements. One Head Teacher explained that completion is not achieved by chance but through continuous support from both parents and schools. The respondent stated that:

> *"Children who complete Primary Seven usually come from families where parents keep encouraging them even when they face challenges. Parents attend meetings, follow report cards, provide school requirements and motivate children not to give up. Where parents lose interest, many learners eventually withdraw before completing school." (HT2)*

An Education Officer also observed that many cases of non-completion are linked to weak parental support rather than lack of school opportunities. The respondent remarked that:

> *"Government has expanded access to primary education, but completion still depends on the support learners receive from home. Parents should continue encouraging*

children, especially girls, to remain in school until they finish Primary Seven despite economic challenges or community pressures." (EO1)

The School Inspector further noted that schools which maintain strong partnerships with parents generally record better completion rates. According to the respondent:

"Whenever schools keep parents informed about learners' progress and involve them in solving problems early, more children stay in school until completion. Good communication between parents and schools prevents many learners from dropping out before finishing the primary cycle." (SI1)

The interview findings suggest that sustained parental involvement throughout a child's education contributes significantly to improved completion rates in primary schools.

4.4.3 School dropout among pupils

Table 4.8: Descriptive statistics for school dropout among pupils

Dropout	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	SD+D (%)	A+SA (%)	Mean	Std Dev
Few pupils drop out of school before completion.	5.1	5.1	7.7	56.4	25.6	10.2	82.0	3.92	1.10
Parental involvement reduces the likelihood of school dropout.	0.0	2.6	2.6	47.4	47.4	2.6	94.8	4.40	0.67
School dropout is common where parents are less involved.	0.0	7.7	5.1	23.1	64.1	7.7	87.2	4.44	1.06
Pupils remain in school when parents support their education.	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.6	74.4	0.0	100.0	4.74	0.44
Average	**1.3**	**3.9**	**3.9**	**38.1**	**52.9**	**5.2**	**91.0**	**4.38**	**0.82**

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Not Sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, Std Deviation

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 4.8 examined respondents' views regarding school dropout among pupils. Overall, respondents expressed a very high level of agreement, with an average agreement of 91.0%, disagreement of 5.2%, a mean score of 4.38 and a standard deviation of 0.82. These findings suggest that parental involvement was widely perceived as an important factor in reducing school dropout.

The findings showed that 82.0% of respondents agreed that few pupils dropped out of school before completing primary education, whereas 10.2% expressed disagreement and 7.7% remained neutral. The statement attained a mean score of 3.92 with a standard deviation of 1.10, indicating that dropout was relatively low in the sampled schools. Similarly, 94.8% of respondents agreed that parental involvement reduced the likelihood of school dropout, while

only 2.6% expressed disagreement and 2.6% remained undecided. This statement obtained a mean score of 4.40 with a standard deviation of 0.67, demonstrating a strong belief that active parental participation helps retain pupils in school.

The findings further revealed that 87.2% of respondents agreed that school dropout was common where parents were less involved, compared to 7.7% who expressed disagreement, while 5.1% remained neutral. This statement recorded a mean score of 4.44 and a standard deviation of 1.06, indicating that respondents viewed inadequate parental involvement as a major contributor to school dropout.

The strongest consensus was observed on the statement that pupils remain in school when parents support their education, where all respondents (100.0%) expressed agreement and none expressed disagreement or neutrality. This statement recorded the highest mean score of 4.74 with a remarkably low standard deviation of 0.44, indicating very strong agreement among respondents.

The interview findings further revealed that respondents regarded parental involvement as one of the most effective strategies for reducing school dropout. They explained that most cases of dropout arise from poor parental supervision, poverty, child neglect, early marriages, domestic violence and negative community attitudes towards education. One Head Teacher explained that parental negligence contributes greatly to school dropout. The respondent stated that:

> *"Many children do not drop out because they dislike school. They leave because nobody is following them. Some parents fail to provide basic needs, others allow children to remain at home doing domestic work or going to the garden. When parents become serious about education, many of these children continue learning instead of dropping out." (HT3)*

An SMC member also highlighted the importance of guidance and counselling in preventing dropout. The respondent observed that:

> *"Parents should continue talking to their children about the importance of education. Learners who receive encouragement at home normally overcome challenges and remain in school. Where there is no guidance, children are easily influenced by bad peer groups, early marriages and other behaviours that lead to school dropout." (SMC1)*

Similarly, an Education Officer explained that community participation is equally important in addressing dropout. The respondent stated that:

"Preventing school dropout is not only the responsibility of schools. Parents, local leaders, religious leaders and the community should work together to identify children who have stopped attending school and encourage them to return before they completely abandon education." (EO1)

The interview findings demonstrate that active parental involvement, continuous guidance and strong community support greatly reduce school dropout and improve pupils' chances of completing primary education.

4.4.4 Absenteeism among pupils

Table 4.9: Descriptive statistics for absenteeism among pupils

Absenteeism	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	SD+D (%)	A+SA (%)	Mean	Std Dev
Absenteeism is low among pupils in this school.	15.4	30.8	15.4	25.6	12.8	46.2	38.4	2.90	1.71
Parental supervision reduces cases of absenteeism.	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.7	55.3	0.0	100.0	4.55	0.50
Pupils frequently miss school when parents are less involved.	0.0	2.6	7.7	46.2	43.6	2.6	89.8	4.31	0.71
School attendance improves when parents monitor pupils closely.	0.0	0.0	2.6	41.0	56.4	0.0	97.4	4.54	0.55
Average	**3.9**	**8.4**	**6.4**	**39.4**	**42.0**	**12.3**	**81.4**	**4.08**	**0.87**

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Not Sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, Std Deviation

Source: Field Data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 4.9 examined respondents' perceptions regarding absenteeism among pupils in the selected primary schools. Overall, respondents expressed a high level of agreement with the statements on absenteeism, as reflected by an average agreement of 81.4%, disagreement of 12.3%, a mean score of 4.08 and a standard deviation of 0.87. These findings suggest that respondents generally believed parental involvement helps in reducing absenteeism and promoting regular school attendance.

The findings revealed that only 38.4% of respondents expressed agreement that absenteeism was low among pupils in their schools, while 46.2% expressed disagreement and 15.4% were not sure. This statement recorded the lowest mean score of 2.90 with the highest standard deviation of 1.71, indicating considerable variation in respondents' views and suggesting that absenteeism remained a challenge in some of the selected schools.

The findings further showed that all respondents (100.0%) expressed agreement that parental supervision reduces cases of absenteeism, with no respondent expressing disagreement or neutrality. This statement attained the highest mean score of 4.55 with a standard deviation of 0.50, demonstrating a very strong consensus that active parental supervision contributes significantly to improving pupils' school attendance. Similarly, 89.8% of respondents agreed

that pupils frequently missed school when parents were less involved in their education, whereas only 2.6% expressed disagreement and 7.7% remained neutral. This statement recorded a mean score of 4.31 with a standard deviation of 0.71, indicating that respondents strongly associated limited parental involvement with increased absenteeism among pupils.

The results also revealed that 97.4% of respondents expressed agreement that school attendance improves when parents closely monitor their children, while only 2.6% remained neutral and none expressed disagreement. The statement obtained a mean score of 4.54 with a standard deviation of 0.55, reflecting a high level of consistency in respondents' opinions regarding the importance of parental monitoring in enhancing regular school attendance.

The interview findings revealed that absenteeism remains one of the major challenges affecting pupils' retention in primary schools. Respondents explained that irregular attendance is commonly associated with poverty, hunger, illness, inadequate parental supervision, domestic responsibilities and weak follow-up by parents. One Head Teacher explained that many cases of absenteeism can be prevented through closer parental supervision. The respondent noted that:

> *"When parents know where their children are every morning and evening, absenteeism becomes very low. The challenge comes when children leave home without proper supervision. Some spend the day in the trading centres, grazing animals or helping in gardens instead of attending lessons. Parents should regularly check attendance and communicate with teachers whenever their children are absent." (HT4)*

The School Inspector also observed that schools should quickly respond whenever learners begin missing classes. According to the respondent:

> *"Schools should not wait until a learner has been absent for many weeks. Teachers should immediately contact parents, visit homes where possible and involve local leaders to establish why the learner is absent. Early follow-up prevents prolonged absenteeism and eventual dropout." (SI1)*

An Education Officer further emphasized that poverty should not prevent communities from supporting children's education. The respondent explained that:

> *"Although poverty contributes to absenteeism, communities should continue encouraging parents to prioritise education. Local leaders, schools and development partners should work together to support vulnerable learners so that financial challenges do not keep children away from school." (EO1)*

The interview findings indicate that absenteeism can be substantially reduced through effective parental supervision, timely communication between schools and parents, early intervention by school authorities and community support for vulnerable learners.

4.5 Relationship between Parental Involvement and Pupils' Retention in UPE Schools

The third research question sought to examine the relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention and to test the null hypothesis (H_0) that there is no significant relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county. Pearson correlation and hierarchical multiple regression were used, and the influence of the moderating variables (socio-economic status, government policy and school environment) was assessed in the second regression model.

Table 4.10: Pearson correlation between parental involvement and pupils' retention

Correlations

		Parental Involvement	Level of Pupils' Retention
Parental Involvement	Pearson Correlation	1	.471**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Level of Pupils' Retention	Pearson Correlation	.471**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

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

The findings presented in Table 4.10 examined the relationship between overall parental involvement and pupils' retention in primary schools in Kitgum District using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention ($r = 0.471$, $p = 0.000$, $N = 400$). Since the probability value ($p = 0.000$) was less than the 0.01 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H0) of no significant relationship was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted.

Based on Cohen's (1988) scale (Section 3.11.1), the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.471$) indicates a moderate positive relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention. This implies that increased parental involvement is associated with improved pupils' retention in primary schools. In other words, when parents actively participate in their children's education through home support, school participation, communication with teachers and provision of learning materials, pupils are more likely to attend school regularly, progress through classes and complete the primary education cycle. The findings therefore indicates that parental

involvement is an important factor influencing pupils' retention in primary schools in Kitgum District.

Table 4.11: Pearson correlation between dimensions of parental involvement and pupils' retention

Correlations

		Level of Pupils' Retention
Level of Pupils' Retention	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	400
Home-Based Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.344**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	400
School-Based Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.429**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	400
Parent–Teacher Communication	Pearson Correlation	.354**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	400
Provision of Scholastic Materials	Pearson Correlation	.371**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	400

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

The findings presented in Table 4.11 examined the relationship between the individual dimensions of parental involvement and pupils' retention in primary schools in Kitgum District using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The analysis revealed that all four dimensions of parental involvement had positive and statistically significant relationships with pupils' retention at the 0.01 level of significance ($p = 0.000$, $N = 400$). Based on Cohen's (1988) scale, all four correlations were moderate ($r = 0.344$ to 0.429). This indicates that improvements in each dimension of parental involvement are associated with increased levels of pupils' retention.

School-based involvement exhibited the strongest positive relationship with pupils' retention ($r = 0.429$, $p = 0.000$), suggesting that parents who regularly attended school meetings, participated in school activities and followed up pupils' academic progress were more likely to contribute to improved pupils' attendance, progression and completion of primary education.

Provision of scholastic materials recorded the second strongest positive relationship with pupils' retention (r = 0.371, p = 0.000). This finding implies that providing pupils with the necessary learning materials and meeting school requirements enhances their ability to remain in school and successfully complete the primary education cycle.

Parent–teacher communication also demonstrated a positive and statistically significant relationship with pupils' retention (r = 0.354, p = 0.000). This indicates that regular communication between parents and teachers regarding pupils' attendance, behaviour and academic performance positively contributes to pupils' continued participation and retention in school. Similarly, home-based involvement registered a positive and statistically significant relationship with pupils' retention (r = 0.344, p = 0.000). Although this was the weakest correlation among the four dimensions, it nevertheless suggests that parents' supervision of homework, provision of academic guidance and monitoring of school attendance contribute positively to pupils' retention.

The findings demonstrate that all four dimensions of parental involvement were positively associated with pupils' retention, with school-based involvement exhibiting the strongest relationship and home-based involvement the weakest. These results suggest that strengthening parental participation both at school and at home can contribute to improved pupils' retention in primary schools in Kitgum District.

Table 4.12: Multiple regression model summary for predicting pupils' retention

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.483[a]	.233	.206	.39697
2	.773[b]	.597	.571	.29177

a. Predictors: (Constant), Provision of Scholastic Materials, Home-Based Involvement, Parent–Teacher Communication, School-Based Involvement
b. Predictors: (Constant), Provision of Scholastic Materials, Home-Based Involvement, Parent–Teacher Communication, School-Based Involvement, Government Policy, Socio-Economic Status, School Environment

The findings presented in Table 4.12 show the regression model summary used to determine the extent to which parental involvement predicts pupils' retention before and after incorporating the moderating variables.

Model One included only the four dimensions of parental involvement as predictors of pupils' retention. The model produced a multiple correlation coefficient of R = 0.483 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.206, implying that the four forms of parental involvement jointly explained 20.6% of the variation in pupils' retention. The adjusted R^2 was used for interpretation because it corrects the R^2 (0.233) for the number of predictors in the model and therefore gives a more accurate estimate of the variation explained (Field, 2018).

Model Two added socio-economic status, government policy and school environment to the four dimensions of parental involvement. The multiple correlation coefficient increased to R = 0.773 and the adjusted R^2 to 0.571, implying that parental involvement together with the moderating variables explained 57.1% of the variation in pupils' retention.

The increase in the adjusted R^2 from 20.6% to 57.1% (an additional 36.5%) demonstrates that socio-economic status, government policy and school environment substantially strengthen the ability of parental involvement to explain pupils' retention. Nevertheless, 42.9% of the variation in pupils' retention remained unexplained by the variables in the model, which implies that other factors not included in this study, such as school leadership, school feeding, distance to school, child labour and early marriage, may also influence pupils' retention.

Table 4.13: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results for the regression models on pupils' retention

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.864	4	4.466	29.471	.000[b]
	Residual	59.859	395	.152		
	Total	77.723	399			
2	Regression	45.715	7	6.531	79.983	.000[c]
	Residual	32.008	392	.082		
	Total	77.723	399			

a. Dependent Variable: Level of Pupils' Retention
b. Predictors: (Constant), Provision of Scholastic Materials, Home-Based Involvement, Parent–Teacher Communication, School-Based Involvement
c. Predictors: (Constant), Provision of Scholastic Materials, Home-Based Involvement, Parent–Teacher Communication, School-Based Involvement, Government Policy, Socio-Economic Status, School Environment

The findings presented in Table 4.13 assessed the overall significance of the regression models in explaining pupils' retention in primary schools. The ANOVA results were used to determine whether the predictor variables jointly provided a statistically significant explanation of variations in pupils' retention.

For Model One, which included only the four dimensions of parental involvement, the regression model was statistically significant (F = 29.471, p = 0.000). Since the significance value was less than the 0.05 level of significance, the model adequately predicted pupils' retention. This finding indicates that home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent–teacher communication and provision of scholastic materials jointly explained a significant proportion of the variation in pupils' retention.

Model Two incorporated the moderating variables of socio-economic status, government policy and school environment in addition to the four dimensions of parental involvement. The results showed that the overall regression model remained highly statistically significant (F = 79.983, p = 0.000). The substantial increase in the F-statistic from 29.471 in Model One to 79.983 in Model Two indicates that the inclusion of the moderating variables considerably improved the predictive power of the regression model.

The ANOVA results demonstrate that both regression models were statistically significant in explaining pupils' retention. However, the model that included the moderating variables provided a much stronger explanation of variations in pupils' retention than the model based solely on parental involvement. This finding suggests that socio-economic status, government policy and school environment strengthen the influence of parental involvement on pupils' retention in primary schools in Kitgum District.

Table 4.14: Regression coefficients for predictors of pupils' retention

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	2.623	.137		19.202	.000
	Home-Based Involvement	.031	.028	.068	1.096	.274
	School-Based Involvement	.153	.050	.222	3.054	.002
	Parent–Teacher Communication	.104	.033	.175	3.157	.002
	Provision of Scholastic Materials	.090	.042	.134	2.119	.035
2	(Constant)	.132	.185		.711	.477
	Home-Based Involvement	.054	.021	.119	2.603	.010
	School-Based Involvement	.106	.040	.154	2.662	.008
	Parent–Teacher Communication	.109	.025	.182	4.382	.000
	Provision of Scholastic Materials	.174	.032	.259	5.450	.000
	Socio-Economic Status	.168	.030	.205	5.596	.000
	Government Policy	.119	.025	.163	4.724	.000
	School Environment	.482	.039	.501	12.517	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Level of Pupils' Retention

The findings presented in Table 4.14 examined the individual contribution of each predictor variable to pupils' retention in primary schools in Kitgum District. Two regression models were estimated to determine the effect of parental involvement dimensions alone and then after incorporating the moderating variables.

In Model One, which included only the four dimensions of parental involvement, the results showed mixed levels of statistical significance. Home-based involvement had a positive but statistically insignificant effect on pupils' retention (B = 0.031, p = 0.274). This implies that a

unit increase in home-based involvement would lead to a 0.031 increase in pupils' retention; however, this effect is not statistically significant, indicating that home-based involvement alone does not meaningfully predict retention when considered alongside other variables.

In contrast, school-based involvement had a statistically significant positive effect on pupils' retention (B = 0.153, p = 0.002). This indicates that a unit increase in school-based involvement leads to a 0.153 increase in pupils' retention. This suggests that increased parental participation in school activities such as meetings, follow-ups and school engagement significantly enhances pupils' retention. Similarly, parent–teacher communication also had a significant positive effect (B = 0.104, p = 0.002), implying that a unit increase in parent–teacher communication leads to a 0.104 increase in pupils' retention. This demonstrates that regular communication between parents and teachers improves pupils' attendance, progression and completion. Provision of scholastic materials also significantly influenced pupils' retention (B = 0.090, p = 0.035), meaning that a unit increase in provision of scholastic materials leads to a 0.090 increase in pupils' retention, highlighting the importance of learning resources in sustaining school participation.

Model One demonstrates that while all parental involvement variables were positively related to pupils' retention, only school-based involvement, parent–teacher communication and provision of scholastic materials had statistically significant effects.

In Model Two, after the inclusion of socio-economic status, government policy and school environment, all predictor variables became statistically significant, although with varying levels of influence. Home-based involvement became significant (B = 0.054, p = 0.010), indicating that a unit increase in home-based involvement leads to a 0.054 increase in pupils' retention when contextual factors are considered. This suggests that parental support at home becomes more meaningful when socio-economic and environmental conditions are accounted for.

School-based involvement remained significant (B = 0.106, p = 0.008), meaning that a unit increase in school-based involvement results in a 0.106 increase in pupils' retention, confirming its continued importance in influencing retention outcomes. Parent–teacher communication showed a stronger and highly significant effect (B = 0.109, p = 0.000), indicating that a unit increase in parent–teacher communication leads to a 0.109 increase in pupils' retention, suggesting that effective communication is a key driver of improved retention.

Provision of scholastic materials also had a strong and highly significant effect (B = 0.174, p = 0.000), meaning that a unit increase in provision of scholastic materials leads to a 0.174

increase in pupils' retention, highlighting the critical role of learning resources in supporting continuous school attendance.

Among the moderating variables, socio-economic status had a significant positive effect on pupils' retention (B = 0.168, p = 0.000), implying that a unit increase in socio-economic status leads to a 0.168 increase in pupils' retention, suggesting that improved household economic conditions enhance pupils' ability to remain in school. Government policy also significantly influenced retention (B = 0.119, p = 0.000), meaning that a unit increase in supportive government policy implementation leads to a 0.119 increase in pupils' retention, indicating the importance of policy support such as UPE in sustaining education. School environment emerged as the strongest predictor in the model (B = 0.482, p = 0.000), indicating that a unit increase in a conducive school environment leads to a 0.482 increase in pupils' retention, demonstrating that a safe, supportive and resourceful learning environment has the greatest influence on pupils' retention among all variables studied.

The results show that while all forms of parental involvement positively influence pupils' retention, their effects become stronger and more statistically significant when socio-economic status, government policy and school environment are considered. The school environment remains the most influential factor in explaining pupils' retention in primary schools in Kitgum District.

The interview findings supported the quantitative results by confirming that parental involvement is significant in improving pupils' retention in primary schools. Respondents consistently observed that learners whose parents actively participate in their education are more likely to attend school regularly, remain in school and successfully complete the primary cycle. They further explained that parental involvement becomes more effective when schools maintain good communication with parents and when the learning environment is supportive. One Head Teacher explained that parental involvement directly influences learners' commitment to education. The respondent stated that:

> *"From our experience, children whose parents regularly monitor their education rarely drop out. These parents attend meetings, communicate with teachers, provide school requirements and encourage their children to continue learning even when challenges arise. Such learners attend classes more regularly and complete Primary Seven." (HT2)*

An Education Officer similarly emphasized that parental involvement should be viewed as a partnership between homes and schools. According to the respondent:

"Education succeeds when parents and schools work together. Even where families have limited income, parents who communicate with teachers, supervise learning at home and encourage their children usually have learners who remain in school. The support from home gives children confidence and motivation to continue learning." (EO1)

The School Inspector further observed that the school environment and government support strengthen the impact of parental involvement on retention. The respondent remarked that:

"Parents may support their children, but schools must also provide a safe and friendly learning environment. Government policies such as UPE also help children access education. When parents, schools and government all play their roles, learners are more likely to attend regularly, progress well and complete primary education." (SI1)

The interview findings corroborate the quantitative results by demonstrating that parental involvement positively influences pupils' retention. The respondents further showed that this relationship is strengthened by favourable socio-economic conditions, supportive government policies and a conducive school environment, which collectively enhance pupils' attendance, progression and completion of primary education.

The descriptive statistics on the moderating variables (Appendix V) further showed that respondents agreed that school environment (Mean = 4.42), socio-economic status (Mean = 4.12) and government policy (Mean = 4.06) influence the relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention. These perceptions are consistent with the regression results in Table 4.14, in which school environment was the strongest predictor of pupils' retention ($\beta = 0.501$), followed by provision of scholastic materials ($\beta = 0.259$) and socio-economic status ($\beta = 0.205$).

Chapter Five

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, the discussion of the findings in relation to the study objectives and the reviewed literature, the conclusions, the recommendations and the areas for further study.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The study sought to establish the forms of parental involvement practiced in primary schools, determine the level of pupils' retention, and determine the relationship between parental involvement and pupils' retention while considering the moderating effects of socio-economic status, government policy and school environment.

The findings on the first objective revealed that parental involvement in the selected primary schools was practiced through four major forms, namely home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent–teacher communication and provision of scholastic materials. School-based involvement and provision of scholastic materials recorded relatively higher levels of practice compared to home-based involvement. The findings also indicated that although many parents participated in supervising learning at home, monitoring attendance, communicating with teachers, attending school meetings and providing learning materials, variations still existed across households due to differences in parental commitment and household circumstances.

Regarding the second objective, the study established that pupils' retention in the selected primary schools was generally satisfactory in terms of progression and completion. Parental involvement was perceived to contribute to regular attendance, completion, reduced dropout and lower absenteeism. However, regular attendance was only moderate, and absenteeism remained a challenge among some learners, particularly where parental support was inadequate.

Regarding the third objective, the study established that parental involvement had a positive and statistically significant relationship with pupils' retention. All the dimensions of parental involvement were positively associated with pupils' retention, with school-based involvement showing the strongest relationship, followed by provision of scholastic materials, parent–teacher communication and home-based involvement. The null hypothesis (H0) was therefore rejected. The regression analysis further revealed that the four forms of parental involvement explained 20.6% of the variation in pupils' retention and that this rose to 57.1% when socio-economic status, government policy and school environment were considered. Among the

moderating variables, school environment was the strongest factor influencing pupils' retention, followed by socio-economic status and government policy.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

5.2.1 Forms of Parental Involvement in UPE Schools

Home-based parental involvement

The study established that home-based parental involvement was practiced at a moderate level among parents in the selected primary schools in Kitgum District. While many parents provided academic guidance and monitored pupils' school attendance, fewer consistently supervised homework or maintained structured study routines at home. Parents who regularly followed up homework, monitored attendance, counselled learners and created a supportive learning environment were perceived to contribute positively to pupils' commitment to schooling and continued attendance (Table 4.2; HT1, HT2, EO1). Although parents recognise their responsibility in supporting learning from home, the intensity and consistency of such involvement remain uneven across households. The findings are in line with Dong, Cao and Li (2020), who observed that home-based parental involvement extends beyond providing financial support to include supervising children's behaviour, monitoring attendance, establishing study routines and ensuring that learners complete school assignments. They argued that such parenting practices create a structured home environment that creates positive learning habits and encourages children to be engaged with school. The present study similarly found that parents who monitored attendance and guided learners academically contributed to improved retention. However, unlike Dong et al. (2020), who emphasised the establishment of consistent study schedules as a common parental practice, the current study found this to be one of the weakest aspects of home-based involvement. This difference is attributed to the socio-economic realities of many households in Kitgum District, where parents devote substantial time to subsistence farming and informal economic activities, leaving limited opportunity to supervise evening study or maintain regular learning schedules.

The findings are also consistent with the work of Castro et al. (2020), who reported that parents who supervise homework, monitor assignments and encourage reading at home strengthen learners' academic engagement and educational persistence. Castro et al. argued that direct parental participation in learning activities improves children's confidence and willingness to remain in school. Likewise, respondents in the present study indicated that pupils whose parents regularly supervised homework and discussed schoolwork demonstrated stronger commitment to education and were less likely to develop absenteeism. Nevertheless, whereas Castro et al. largely examined areas where parents possessed adequate literacy skills to assist learners academically, the present findings indicates that parental guidance in Kitgum District

often occurs through encouragement, counselling and monitoring rather than direct academic assistance.

Similarly, the study is consistent with Barnes et al. (2020), who found that parental guidance concerning education, discipline and future aspirations strengthens learners' motivation and encourages positive attitudes towards schooling. Their study revealed that continuous parent-child discussions help children appreciate the long-term value of education and remain focused on academic goals. The findings of the present study confirm this position, with school administrators explaining that learners whose parents counselled them regularly and encouraged them to persevere despite academic difficulties were more likely to maintain regular attendance and complete primary education.

School-based parental involvement

The study found that school-based parental involvement was highly practiced in the selected primary schools in Kitgum District. The findings showed that many parents regularly attended Parent–Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, participated in school activities and supported school development programmes. However, fewer parents made regular visits to schools to follow up on the academic progress of their individual children. The findings further revealed that active participation in school activities strengthens collaboration between parents and teachers, enhances monitoring of pupils' academic and behavioural progress, and enables schools and families to jointly address challenges. These findings indicates that although parents are generally willing to participate in collective school programmes, continuous individual follow-up of learners is comparatively limited. The findings are consistent with Barce (2025), who identified attendance at school meetings as one of the most common forms of parental involvement in primary schools. According to Barce, participation in parent–teacher association meetings, class meetings and academic discussions enables parents to be informed about school activities and the educational needs of their children. The current study similarly established that attendance at school meetings was one of the strongest aspects of school-based parental involvement. The findings further demonstrated that parents who regularly attended school meetings were more aware of issues relating to learner attendance, discipline and academic performance, allowing them to cooperate more effectively with teachers in supporting pupils' education. Regular participation in school meetings strengthens shared responsibility between schools and parents, thereby contributing to improved pupil retention.

The findings also corroborate with Munthe and Westergård (2023), who observed that school meetings provide a platform through which parents and teachers exchange information regarding learners' attendance, behaviour and academic progress. They argued that parents who regularly participate in school meetings become more knowledgeable about school

expectations and are therefore better positioned to support their children's education. Similarly, respondents in the present study explained that school meetings enabled parents to understand challenges affecting learners and to respond promptly to academic or behavioural problems. Such interaction strengthens accountability between schools and families and reduces the likelihood that pupils' challenges will remain unresolved until they result in absenteeism and dropout.

The study also agrees with the findings of Kiely et al. (2019), who reported that school meetings strengthen communication between schools and families by providing opportunities for teachers to share information directly with parents regarding learners' progress and school programmes. Kiely et al. argued that effective communication through school meetings promotes collaborative decision-making and improves learner outcomes. Likewise, the present study found that parents who actively participated in school activities maintained closer relationships with teachers and became more involved in addressing learners' academic and behavioural challenges. However, whereas Kiely et al. largely focused on communication within well-established school systems, the current findings indicates that in Kitgum District school meetings also serve an additional role of mobilising parents to collectively address challenges associated with Universal Primary Education, including absenteeism, inadequate learning resources and learner welfare.

The findings are equally consistent with Kocsis (2024), who found that parental volunteering in school activities constitutes a dimension of parental involvement. According to Kocsis, parents contribute to the daily functioning of schools by assisting in classroom activities, maintaining school facilities, supporting co-curricular programmes and participating in school events. The present study similarly established that many parents participated actively in school activities and contributed towards school development programmes. Parents frequently participated in communal activities such as compound maintenance, classroom construction and other school improvement initiatives. Such participation not only improves the physical learning environment but also strengthens parents' sense of ownership and commitment towards their children's education.

The study also supports the findings of Jeptoo (2024), who observed that parental volunteering commonly occurs through communal activities organised by schools and parent–teacher associations, particularly in school construction, compound maintenance and learner supervision. Jeptoo argued that such involvement promotes stronger relationships between schools and surrounding communities while improving accountability for learner welfare. The findings of the present study confirm this argument, with respondents indicating that parents who contribute labour and participate in school development activities become more interested

in monitoring learners' progress and supporting school programmes. Nevertheless, the current study found that despite active participation in communal school activities, relatively fewer parents made individual follow-up visits to monitor their children's academic performance. While collective participation is well established, personalised engagement with learners' academic progress requires more strengthening.

The findings further agree with Agbi (2024), who found that parents participate in school governance through Parent–Teacher Associations, School Management Committees and other decision-making structures where issues concerning learner welfare, discipline and school development are discussed. Agbi argued that involving parents in governance promotes transparency and strengthens school-community partnerships. Similarly, respondents in the present study emphasised that participation in PTA and SMC meetings allows parents to contribute ideas, understand school challenges and support decisions intended to improve learner welfare and retention.

The findings are also consistent with Smith (2021), who observed that involving parents in school decision-making strengthens communication between schools and communities because parents become more informed about school operations and educational policies. Smith argued that when parents feel included in school governance, they develop greater confidence in schools and become more willing to support educational programmes. The present study similarly found that schools with active parental participation experienced stronger cooperation between teachers and parents, enabling early intervention whenever pupils experienced attendance, disciplinary or academic challenges. Such collaborative decision-making creates a supportive educational environment that enhances pupils' commitment to learning and promotes continued school attendance.

This study demonstrated that school-based parental involvement constitutes one of the strongest forms of parental participation in primary schools in Kitgum District. Regular attendance at school meetings, participation in school activities, contribution to school development programmes and involvement in school governance. However, the lower level of individual follow-up visits revealed that schools should encourage parents to complement collective participation with more regular monitoring of their own children's academic progress.

Parent–teacher communication

The study found that parent–teacher communication was generally well established in the selected primary schools in Kitgum District. The findings indicated that teachers regularly communicated with parents regarding pupils' attendance, behaviour and academic

performance, while there was also regular sharing of academic information between schools and families. However, the study further established that some parents did not always respond promptly to communication initiated by schools, making parental responsiveness the weakest aspect of this dimension. The interview findings equally revealed that continuous communication between parents and teachers enables early identification of learners' academic, behavioural and attendance-related challenges before they develop into prolonged absenteeism and school dropout. These findings showed that effective communication strengthens collaboration between homes and schools, although greater parental responsiveness is still required to maximise its benefits. The findings are consistent with Kiely et al. (2019), who observed that communication between schools and families is strengthened when teachers regularly share information concerning learners' academic progress, attendance and school activities. According to Kiely et al., consistent communication creates opportunities for parents to understand their children's educational needs and to participate more actively in addressing challenges. Similarly, the present study established that teachers maintained regular communication with parents regarding learners' progress, while school administrators explained that early communication enabled parents and teachers to jointly resolve problems affecting pupils before they became serious enough to interfere with school attendance.

The findings are also supported by Munthe and Westergård (2023), who argued that effective communication between schools and parents improves parental awareness of school expectations, learner behaviour and academic performance. They noted that parents who receive timely information from schools are more likely to provide appropriate support and cooperate with teachers in promoting learners' success. Likewise, respondents in the current study explained that communication enables parents to monitor attendance, discipline and academic performance while allowing teachers to alert parents on learners’ progress.

The findings further agree with Barnes et al. (2020), who found that regular discussions between parents and children on education, discipline and future aspirations are most effective when supported by continuous communication between parents and schools. Barnes et al. argued that schools provide parents with information that enables them to reinforce educational expectations within the home environment. Similarly, the findings of the present study revealed that parents who received frequent updates from teachers were better able to supervise learners, encourage regular attendance and address academic challenges before they negatively affected educational progress. This showed that communication between parents and teachers complements home-based parental involvement by ensuring that parents remain informed about their children's educational experiences.

The findings are also consistent with the observations of Rubie-Davies (2024), who found that continuous dialogue between families and educational institutions strengthens learners' motivation, discipline and commitment to schooling. Rubie-Davies argued that sustained communication promotes trust and cooperation, enabling parents and teachers to provide consistent guidance to learners both at school and at home. The findings of the present study confirm this position, with respondents indicating that schools maintaining regular communication with parents experienced fewer cases of prolonged absenteeism because parents responded more quickly whenever learners encountered challenges. However, unlike Rubie-Davies (2024), whose study found active participation from both schools and parents, the current findings revealed that although schools consistently initiated communication, some parents delayed responding to messages or invitations from schools.

Provision of scholastic materials by parents

The study found that provision of scholastic materials was one of the strongest forms of parental involvement in the selected primary schools in Kitgum District. The findings indicated that many parents provided essential learning materials such as exercise books, pens and other school requirements, while many also supported payment for additional school requirements whenever necessary. Lack of scholastic materials negatively affects pupils' school attendance and increases the likelihood of absenteeism. The study showed that pupils who receive adequate learning materials from their parents are more confident in participating in classroom activities, attend school more consistently and are less likely to withdraw from school. These findings indicates that parental provision of scholastic materials constitutes a form of support that directly influences pupils' participation in learning and their retention throughout the primary education cycle. The findings are consistent with Alam and Hamzah (2025), who observed that parents support schools through financial contributions, provision of learning materials and participation in fundraising activities aimed at improving educational facilities and learner welfare. According to Alam and Hamzah, parental investment in educational resources demonstrates commitment to children's education and creates conditions that enable learners to participate effectively in school activities. Similarly, the present study established that many parents fulfilled their responsibility of providing scholastic materials and supporting school requirements, thereby enabling pupils to attend school with the resources necessary for effective learning.

The findings also corroborate with World Bank (2021), which reported that parental and community contributions continue to complement government investment in education across many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The World Bank reported that despite government financing of basic education programmes, parents remain responsible for providing essential

learning materials and supporting school improvement initiatives. The current study similarly found that although Universal Primary Education has reduced the financial burden associated with tuition, parents' roles are supplying exercise books, pens, uniforms and other basic learning requirements.

The findings also agree with Dong, Cao and Li (2020), who observed that parenting responsibilities include providing basic learning materials alongside supervising children's learning and monitoring school attendance. They argued that adequate educational resources create a supportive learning environment that enables children to participate fully in school activities and maintain interest in education. Similarly, respondents in the present study explained that learners who attend school with the necessary materials participate more actively in classroom learning, while those lacking such requirements often become discouraged and gradually develop irregular attendance patterns. A study by Castro et al. (2020), found that parental support for learning extends beyond supervision of homework to ensuring that children possess the educational resources required to complete school assignments successfully. Castro et al. argued that learners who receive adequate learning support from their families are better prepared to engage in classroom activities and demonstrate greater persistence in their education. Likewise, the interview findings in the present study revealed that children who lacked exercise books, pens, uniforms and other materials frequently experienced embarrassment, reduced participation in class and, in some cases, prolonged absenteeism.

5.2.2 Level of Pupils' Retention in UPE Schools

Regular attendance of pupils

The study found that the level of pupils' regular attendance in the selected primary schools was moderate. Although parental involvement improves school attendance and that irregular attendance is common among pupils who receive limited parental support, the study found that not all pupils attended school regularly without frequent absenteeism. While parental involvement encourages attendance, regular school attendance is still inconsistent for a considerable proportion of learners. Headteachers, education officers and school inspectors consistently reported that parental involvement serves as a protective factor against irregular attendance but is not always sufficient to eliminate absenteeism where other household and community challenges persist. The findings corroborate with Mugume (2024), who reported that retention in Ugandan primary schools is closely linked to regular attendance and that absenteeism is one of the principal reasons many learners fail to complete the primary education cycle. Mugume observed that children from households where parents provide limited educational support and supervision are more likely to experience interrupted schooling

and eventually leave school before completing Primary Seven. The present findings similarly reveal that respondents overwhelmingly associated poor attendance with inadequate parental involvement.

The findings are also consistent with Mwizerwa and Hesbon (2024), who found that schools with higher retention rates in Rwanda were characterised by regular attendance, active parental supervision and supportive home environments. They argued that attendance should not merely be viewed as a school responsibility but as a shared obligation between schools and families. Their study demonstrated that learners from households where parents monitored daily school attendance and maintained regular communication with teachers exhibited fewer interruptions in learning than those receiving minimal parental supervision. The present study supports this argument, with respondents emphasizing that pupils whose parents ensure they leave home early for school, monitor attendance and respond promptly whenever learners are absent are more likely to remain consistently engaged in education.

Mutinda and Ochieng (2022), established that schools experiencing high absenteeism generally recorded lower retention and progression rates because learners frequently missed instructional time and gradually disengaged from school. Their study associated poor attendance with weak parental follow-up, limited household support and inadequate educational resources. Comparable evidence emerged from the current study, where respondents strongly agreed that attendance improves when parents become actively involved in their children's education. The interview findings further illustrated that parents who maintain regular contact with schools quickly identify attendance problems and collaborate with teachers to resolve them before they become chronic.

The findings further support those of Kipkemboi (2021), who observed progressive declines in learner attendance across primary school levels in Kenya due to household poverty, domestic responsibilities and inadequate parental supervision. Kipkemboi argued that absenteeism often begins as occasional school absence before gradually developing into permanent withdrawal from school. This pattern resonates with the qualitative evidence obtained in the present study, where respondents explained that prolonged absenteeism frequently begins when parents cease monitoring children's daily movements or fail to communicate with schools regarding their children's attendance. Headteachers particularly noted that some learners leave home pretending to attend school but instead engage in income-generating activities or domestic work.

The moderate level of attendance observed in this study is therefore due to the interaction between parental involvement and broader socio-economic realities within Kitgum District. Although parents generally appreciate the importance of education and actively encourage

school attendance, challenges such as poverty, seasonal agricultural activities, domestic labour demands, illness and limited household resources continue to interrupt regular school participation.

Pupils' completion rate

The study established that pupils' completion of the primary education cycle was generally satisfactory in the selected primary schools in Kitgum District. The findings indicate that most learners were able to progress through the different primary grades and complete Primary Seven, although respondents acknowledged that completion was not universal because some learners still withdrew before the end of the cycle. The findings therefore demonstrates that completion is not simply determined by school enrolment but by the continuous educational, emotional and material support that parents provide throughout the child's schooling. These findings are consistent with Mugume (2024), who reported that completion of the primary education cycle remains a challenge in Uganda because many pupils who enrol in Primary One do not eventually complete Primary Seven. Mugume attributed low completion largely to household economic constraints, inadequate parental support and repeated absenteeism. However, Mugume also observed that learners whose parents remained actively engaged in their education demonstrated better progression and higher completion rates than those receiving limited parental support. The present study supports this argument by showing that continuous parental involvement helps sustain learners throughout the primary education cycle despite the challenges they may encounter.

The findings also agree with Mwizerwa and Hesbon (2024), whose study in Rwanda established that schools with stronger parental supervision and supportive home environments consistently recorded higher retention and completion rates than schools where parental participation was limited. According to them, completion depends not only on school-based factors but also on the extent to which parents remain involved in monitoring attendance, encouraging academic effort and maintaining regular contact with schools. Similarly, Mutinda and Ochieng (2022) found in Kenya that schools characterised by strong parental engagement experienced better learner progression and completion because parents continuously reinforced the importance of education and addressed barriers that could interrupt schooling.

The present findings are further supported by Namukwaya and Kibirige (2014), who found that completion of primary education in Kotido District was undermined by absenteeism, inadequate parental support, domestic responsibilities and early marriages. They argued that parental commitment throughout the schooling process enables learners to overcome many of these challenges and remain enrolled until completion. Likewise, the study conducted in Rukiga District (2024) observed that although many learners begin primary education,

completion rates decline where families fail to provide continuous educational support. They concluded that sustained parental participation throughout a child's schooling is essential for improving progression and reducing attrition before Primary Seven.

The findings also corroborate those of Szabó, Zsolnai and Fehérvári (2024), who reported that learners who remain actively engaged in school activities and receive consistent support from their families are more likely to complete their education than learners experiencing weak family involvement. They argued that positive parental support strengthens learners' motivation, resilience and commitment to education even when they encounter academic or social challenges. Similarly, Barragán-Moreno et al. (2025) observed that successful completion of basic education is strongly influenced by the interaction between family support and school conditions. They noted that learners from households where parents actively supervise education and provide essential learning requirements demonstrate greater educational persistence than those from households characterised by limited parental engagement.

The generally favourable completion levels observed in this study are attributed to the increasing recognition among parents in Kitgum District that education is a long-term investment requiring continuous commitment rather than one-time school enrolment. Schools have also strengthened collaboration with parents through Parent–Teacher Association meetings, academic monitoring and regular communication regarding learners' progress. Nevertheless, the interview findings revealed that poverty, domestic responsibilities, inadequate scholastic materials and inconsistent parental follow-up continue to threaten completion for some learners.

School dropout among pupils

The study found that parental involvement is significant in reducing school dropout among pupils in the selected primary schools in Kitgum District. This study generally perceived that schools where parents actively participated in their children's education experienced lower dropout rates, while learners whose parents provided continuous academic, emotional, and material support were more likely to remain in school until completion. The findings further demonstrated that respondents associated reduced dropout with active parental supervision, guidance and counselling, provision of school requirements, and strong collaboration between parents, schools, and the wider community. However, the interviews also revealed that despite these positive outcomes, school dropout continued to occur among some learners due to persistent challenges such as poverty, child neglect, domestic responsibilities, early marriages, and inadequate parental follow-up. These findings indicates that although parental involvement contributes substantially to reducing dropout, it cannot entirely eliminate the influence of

broader household and community factors that disrupt children's education. The findings are consistent with Namukwaya and Kibirige (2014), who found that many pupils in Kotido District failed to complete primary education because of absenteeism, domestic work, early marriages, and inadequate parental support. Their study demonstrated that parental neglect and weak household supervision expose learners to circumstances that eventually lead to school withdrawal before completion of the primary cycle. The present study similarly found that respondents regarded weak parental commitment as one of the major contributors to school dropout, while sustained parental support was viewed as an effective strategy for keeping learners in school. Both studies therefore confirm the view that parental involvement extends beyond providing school requirements to include continuous monitoring, guidance, encouragement, and protection of children from social and economic pressures that may interrupt schooling.

The findings are also in line with Barragán-Moreno et al. (2025), who observed that low retention and school dropout are strongly associated with household poverty, inadequate school facilities, weak parental supervision, and long distances to school. According to their study, learners from disadvantaged households frequently experience interruptions in schooling because families struggle to provide scholastic materials, meals, uniforms, and other educational necessities. The interview findings from the present study echoed these observations, with respondents explaining that many learners discontinue schooling because parents fail to provide essential requirements or prioritise children's participation in domestic labour and other income-generating activities. The agreement between the two studies demonstrates that parental involvement cannot be separated from the socio-economic realities facing households, since financial constraints often limit parents' ability to support children's continuous education even when they value schooling.

Similarly, the findings are in agreement with Szabó, Zsolnai, and Fehérvári (2024), who reported that learners who actively participate in school activities and maintain positive relationships with teachers are considerably less likely to disengage from education. Their study established that weak learner engagement, limited family support, and poor school attachment significantly increase the likelihood of early school leaving. The present study similarly demonstrated that respondents viewed parental involvement as essential in strengthening children's commitment to education by encouraging attendance, monitoring academic progress, maintaining communication with schools, and motivating learners to overcome challenges encountered during schooling. When parents remain actively involved throughout a child's education, learners develop stronger educational aspirations and greater resilience, thereby reducing the likelihood of dropping out.

The findings further correspond with Mutinda and Ochieng (2022), who found considerable differences in retention across Kenyan public primary schools and attributed lower retention to high absenteeism, weak parental follow-up, and inadequate learning resources. Their findings revealed that learners are more likely to discontinue schooling when parental monitoring is weak and schools receive insufficient support from families. The present study similarly established that respondents associated school dropout with limited parental supervision and inadequate educational support at home. However, while Mutinda and Ochieng primarily relied on school enrolment records and head teachers' reports, the current study incorporated perspectives from head teachers, education officers, school inspectors, and School Management Committee members, thereby providing a broader understanding of how parental involvement influences learner retention within the local context of Kitgum District.

The findings also reinforce the observations of Mugume (2024), who reported that a substantial proportion of pupils who enrol in Primary One in Uganda fail to complete Primary Seven because of dropout and repetition, particularly among learners from rural and low-income households. Mugume further argued that household economic hardship and parents' inability to meet educational requirements significantly undermine retention. The present study similarly identified poverty and inadequate parental support as major barriers to sustained school attendance and completion. Although Universal Primary Education has substantially expanded access to basic education, many households continue to face financial hardship, seasonal agricultural demands, orphanhood, child labour, and harmful cultural practices such as early marriage, all of which increase the risk of school dropout. Under such circumstances, active parental involvement becomes a protective factor because parents who consistently supervise their children, maintain communication with schools, provide guidance, and prioritise education are better able to prevent learners from disengaging from schooling. Nevertheless, the persistence of dropout cases despite relatively strong parental involvement indicates that improving retention requires coordinated efforts involving parents, schools, local governments, community leaders, and development partners.

Absenteeism among pupils

The study found that absenteeism remained a challenge affecting pupils' retention in the selected primary schools despite respondents strongly acknowledging that active parental involvement contributes significantly to improving school attendance. The findings indicated that pupils were more likely to attend school consistently when parents closely supervised their daily attendance, maintained communication with teachers, and monitored their educational progress. The interview findings further revealed that respondents associated persistent absenteeism with inadequate parental supervision, poverty, hunger, illness, domestic

responsibilities, and weak follow-up by parents. When parents fail to monitor children's movements and respond promptly to cases of absenteeism, learners are more likely to spend time in gardens, trading centres, or engaging in household activities instead of attending school. These findings therefore indicates that although schools monitor attendance, sustained parental supervision remains indispensable in ensuring that learners attend school regularly and remain engaged throughout the primary education cycle. The findings are consistent with Mugume (2024), who reported that absenteeism was one of the major contributors to low retention in Ugandan primary schools, particularly among learners from rural and low-income households. Mugume observed that frequent absenteeism eventually weakens learners' academic performance, increases repetition, and contributes to school dropout before completion of the primary cycle. The present study similarly established that respondents regarded absenteeism as an important indicator of poor retention and emphasised that learners who frequently miss school are less likely to complete primary education successfully. Both studies therefore demonstrate that regular attendance forms the foundation upon which progression and completion of schooling depend.

The findings also agree with Namukwaya and Kibirige (2014), who found that absenteeism, domestic work, inadequate parental support, and household responsibilities significantly reduced pupils' progression to upper primary classes in Kotido District. Their study established that many children missed school because parents failed to monitor attendance consistently or prioritised children's participation in domestic and economic activities over schooling. Similar observations from the present study showed that some learners remained absent because parents allowed them to work in gardens, engage in household chores, or failed to follow up on their daily attendance. This similarity indicates that absenteeism in many rural communities is closely linked to parental practices and household responsibilities rather than school-related factors alone.

Barragán-Moreno et al. (2025), observed that household poverty, inadequate educational resources, weak parental supervision, and difficult learning conditions significantly increase learner absenteeism and reduce educational retention. According to their study, children from economically disadvantaged households frequently experience interruptions in schooling because parents struggle to provide meals, uniforms, scholastic materials, and other basic educational necessities. The interview findings of the present study showed similar concerns, poverty, hunger, illness, and inability to provide school requirements often discourage learners from attending school consistently. Similarly, Szabó, Zsolnai, and Fehérvári (2024), established that learners who maintain positive relationships with teachers and actively participate in school activities demonstrate better attendance and are less likely to disengage

from education. They argued that weak family support reduces learner motivation and increases the likelihood of prolonged absenteeism, eventually contributing to school dropout. The present study similarly regarded parental encouragement, supervision, and continuous communication with schools as mechanisms for sustaining learner motivation and ensuring regular attendance.

The findings are also consistent with those of Mwizerwa and Hesbon (2024), who found that schools with higher retention rates were characterised by regular attendance, active parental supervision, and supportive school environments. Conversely, schools serving economically disadvantaged communities recorded lower attendance and weaker learner progression because many households experienced persistent socio-economic challenges. Although their study was conducted within a different educational context, the present study similarly found that parental supervision and close cooperation between homes and schools contribute significantly to improved attendance. However, the current findings also demonstrate that socio-economic constraints continue to limit some parents' ability to provide consistent supervision, indicating that strengthening attendance requires both improved parental involvement and broader community support.

This study demonstrated that although parents generally appreciate the value of education, many households continue to experience poverty, food insecurity, seasonal agricultural activities, and other livelihood pressures that compete with children's schooling. In such circumstances, parents reduce supervision over children's education while concentrating on household survival. Consequently, some learners become vulnerable to irregular attendance and prolonged absenteeism.

5.2.3 Relationship between Parental Involvement and Pupils' Retention in UPE Schools

The study established that parental involvement has a significant positive relationship with pupils' retention in primary schools in Kitgum District. The findings indicate that learners whose parents actively participate in their education are more likely to attend school consistently, progress through the different primary grades and complete the primary education cycle than learners whose parents demonstrate limited involvement. The correlation findings showed that all dimensions of parental involvement were positively associated with pupils' retention, with school-based involvement as the strongest predictor, followed by provision of scholastic materials, parent–teacher communication and home-based involvement. The regression analysis demonstrated that parental involvement independently predicts pupils' retention and that this relationship becomes stronger when supported by favourable socio-economic conditions, government policies and a conducive school environment. The qualitative findings confirm these results by revealing that respondents considered parental

participation essential in identifying attendance problems early, supporting learners emotionally and materially, and strengthening collaboration between homes and schools to prevent absenteeism and dropout.

These findings are consistent with Paul, Rashmi and Srivastava (2021), who found that parental involvement significantly reduces the likelihood of school dropout. Their longitudinal study established that learners whose parents regularly attended PTA meetings, discussed academic progress with teachers and supervised homework were less likely to discontinue schooling than learners receiving limited parental support. They explained that active parental participation enables parents to identify educational challenges at an early stage and work together with schools to address them before they negatively affect learners' attendance and progression. The present study similarly demonstrates that active engagement by parents strengthens pupils' retention through continuous monitoring, collaboration with teachers and sustained educational support.

The findings also agree with Kumar et al. (2023), who reported that parental interaction with teachers and participation in school activities significantly improve learners' continuity in school. According to the authors, parents who participate in school programmes become more aware of their children's academic performance, behavioural challenges and attendance patterns, enabling timely interventions that reduce school dropout. Likewise, Kerei et al. (2024) found that home-based and school-based parental involvement positively influence pupils' progression and completion in Kenyan public primary schools. They observed that parents who provide scholastic materials, attend school meetings and participate in school programmes contribute substantially to learners' educational persistence. These findings closely correspond with the present study, which found that school-based parental involvement and provision of scholastic materials were among the strongest predictors of pupils' retention.

The study further corroborates the findings of Mutune, Okoth and Mugambi (2024), who reported a strong positive relationship between parental involvement and learners' retention in schools. They observed that schools which deliberately encourage parental participation experience fewer cases of absenteeism and dropout because parents and teachers share responsibility for monitoring learners' progress. Similarly, Tumwehe (2024) found a statistically significant positive relationship between parental involvement and pupil retention in primary schools in Rukiga District. The study demonstrated that parents who regularly monitored attendance, communicated with teachers and provided essential scholastic materials were more likely to have children who remained in school throughout the primary cycle. Ahereza (2024) similarly established that parental participation in school meetings improves

continuity of schooling because parents become better informed about school programmes and learners' educational needs.

The findings are equally supported by Emurugat et al. (2022), who observed that attendance at school meetings, regular communication with teachers and parental financial contributions towards school programmes contribute significantly to improved learner attendance and progression. Their findings support the present study, which identified school-based involvement, parent–teacher communication and provision of scholastic materials as important dimensions influencing pupils' retention. Furthermore, Berlinski et al. (2025) reported that regular communication and information sharing between schools and parents strengthen learners' retention by enabling parents to respond promptly to attendance, behavioural and academic challenges. They argued that continuous communication creates an effective partnership through which schools and families jointly monitor learners' educational progress. This finding reinforces the current study, where parent–teacher communication emerged as one of the strongest predictors of retention.

The present findings also agree with Marlow and Rehman (2021), whose meta-analysis established a significant negative relationship between positive family support and school absenteeism and dropout. They argued that parental supervision, educational encouragement and emotional support increase learners' attachment to school and reduce the likelihood of withdrawing from education. Similarly, Gil, Antelm-Lanzat, Cacheiro-González and Pérez-Navío (2021) found that learners who experience strong family support demonstrate greater behavioural engagement in school activities, whereas weak parental support contributes to poor participation and irregular attendance. In the same way, Fatimah et al. (2021) concluded that weak parental attention, poor home environments and limited cooperation between schools and families significantly increase school dropout among primary school learners. These findings collectively support the present study's conclusion that effective parental involvement both at home and at school enhances learners' commitment to education and promotes sustained retention.

The findings are further consistent with Islam and Shapla (2021), who established that weak parental participation significantly increases absenteeism among school-going children. Their study demonstrated that learners whose parents rarely attended school meetings or monitored learning activities were more likely to miss classes frequently than learners whose parents remained actively involved. Likewise, Masing and Astuti (2022) identified inadequate parental supervision, limited educational support and household poverty as major contributors to school dropout. Similarly, Barragán-Moreno et al. (2025) observed that inadequate parental support, weak school-family relationships and unfavourable household conditions substantially increase

the likelihood of learners leaving school before completing primary education. These studies reinforce the present findings that parental involvement alone is highly influential but becomes even more effective when complemented by supportive socio-economic conditions, favourable education policies and positive school environments.

The strong relationship observed in this study demonstrates the complementary roles of parents and schools in supporting children's education. Parents provide educational guidance, emotional encouragement, financial support and continuous supervision, while schools provide instruction, monitoring and professional guidance. When these roles are effectively coordinated through regular communication and shared responsibility, learners receive consistent support across both the home and school environments. Such collaboration strengthens learners' motivation, promotes regular attendance, reduces absenteeism and school dropout, and increases the likelihood of completing the primary education cycle. The findings therefore indicate that improving pupils' retention in Kitgum District requires integrated efforts involving parents, schools, communities and government institutions to create an enabling environment in which every learner can remain in school until successful completion of primary education.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concludes that parental involvement in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county is practised mainly through collective school-based activities and provision of scholastic materials, while home-based involvement, especially supervision of homework and setting study time, and parents' follow-up visits to school remain weak. Parents are therefore more involved in what the school organises than in the day-to-day support of their children's learning at home.

The study concludes that pupils' retention in the selected UPE schools is generally satisfactory in terms of progression and completion, but regular attendance is only moderate and absenteeism remains a challenge, particularly among pupils from poor households and those with limited parental supervision. Absenteeism is therefore the main threat to retention in Mucwini Sub-county.

The study concludes that parental involvement has a moderate, positive and significant relationship with pupils' retention. School-based involvement, parent–teacher communication and provision of scholastic materials significantly predict retention, and the influence of parental involvement becomes stronger when households are economically able, government policies are well implemented and the school environment is conducive, with the school

environment having the greatest influence. By establishing these relationships in a post-conflict rural sub-county, the study bridges the contextual and empirical gaps identified in the literature.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of each objective, the following recommendations are made:

Parents and guardians should strengthen home-based involvement by setting regular study time, supervising homework and making follow-up visits to school, in addition to attending meetings and providing scholastic materials. Head teachers and teachers should support this by organising parents' days, class meetings and simple home-learning guidance for parents with limited literacy.

SMCs and PTAs should intensify community sensitisation on parents' responsibilities under the UPE policy and the Education Act (2008), focusing on regular school attendance and continuous parental involvement.

Head teachers and teachers should keep accurate daily attendance registers, follow up absent pupils promptly through phone calls and home visits, and work with local leaders to return pupils who drop out. The Kitgum District Education Office should use school inspection reports to identify schools with high absenteeism and dropout for targeted support.

Government and development partners should expand existing programmes for vulnerable households, such as school feeding and provision of scholastic materials, so that hunger and poverty do not keep pupils away from school.

Since parental involvement significantly predicts retention, the Ministry of Education and Sports should build on its existing UPE guidelines on the roles of parents (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2018) by including parental engagement indicators in school inspection and in planning for the use of UPE capitation grants.

Kitgum District Local Government and school administrators should continue improving the school environment, which had the strongest influence on retention, by providing adequate classrooms, sanitation facilities, safe compounds and learning materials, and should strengthen parent–teacher communication channels such as phone calls, report cards and class meetings.

5.5 Areas for further study

Based on the limitations of this study, the following areas are suggested for further research:

1. A longitudinal cohort study tracking pupils from Primary One to Primary Seven using school records, to measure actual retention rates rather than perceptions of retention, in UPE schools in Kitgum District.
2. Other factors influencing pupils' retention in UPE schools in Northern Uganda, such as school leadership, school feeding and distance to school, since 42.9% of the variation in retention was not explained by the variables in this study.
3. A comparative study of parental involvement and pupils' retention in rural and urban UPE schools, using focus group discussions with parents and pupils.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Informed Consent Form

Title of the study: Parental Involvement and Pupils' Retention in Universal Primary Education Schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District

Researcher: Lakot Christine Canogura, Master of Education in Educational Management, Gulu University (Reg. No. 24/U/0673/MED/PS)

Purpose: You are invited to take part in a study that examines the influence of parental involvement on pupils' retention in UPE schools in Mucwini Sub-county. The information will be used for academic purposes only.

Procedure: If you agree to take part, you will be asked to fill in a questionnaire or to take part in an interview, which will take about 30 to 45 minutes.

Risks and benefits: There are no known risks in taking part in this study. You will not receive any payment, but the findings may help to improve parental involvement and pupils' retention in your school and community.

Confidentiality: Your name will not be written on the questionnaire or in the report. The information you give will be kept confidential and used only for this study.

Voluntary participation: Taking part is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty.

Contact: If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the researcher on 0774999or the supervisors through the Faculty of Education and Humanities, Gulu University.

Consent: I have read (or have had read to me) the information above and I understand the purpose of the study. I voluntarily agree to take part.

Participant's signature/thumbprint: …… Date: ……

Researcher's signature: …… Date: ……

Appendix II: Questionnaire

Introduction

Dear Respondent,

I am Lakot Christine Canogura, a student of Master of Education in Educational Management at Gulu University. This questionnaire is intended to collect information on the topic "Parental Involvement on Pupils' Retention in Universal Primary Education Schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District". You are requested to participate in the research by providing relevant data. All information provided shall be kept confidential and used in this study for academic purposes only. Please tick the most appropriate response or fill in the spaces provided where necessary.

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. **Gender:**

   a. Male ☐

   b. Female ☐

2. **Age:**

   a. Below 25 ☐ b. 25–34 ☐

   c. 35–44 ☐ d. 45–54 ☐

   e. 55+ ☐

3. **Role in school:**

   a. Parent ☐ b. Teacher ☐

   c. Head teacher ☐ d. SMC member ☐

   Other specify _____

4. **Highest education level:**

a. Primary ☐ b. Secondary ☐

c. Diploma ☐ d. Degree ☐

Other specify _____

5. Number of children in primary school:

a. 1–2 ☐ b. 3–4 ☐ c. 5+ ☐

SECTION B: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Please use the scale below to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the statements below.

SCALE	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
	Strongly agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Not sure (N)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)

	Statements	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
A	**Home-Based Involvement**	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	Parents regularly supervise pupils' homework at home.					
2	Parents ensure pupils have a fixed time for study at home.					
3	Parents provide guidance on academic work done at home.					
4	Parents monitor pupils' attendance to school regularly.					
B	**School-Based Involvement**	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	Parents attend school meetings and PTA gatherings regularly.					
2	Parents participate in school activities such as meetings and events.					
3	Parents contribute to school development programmes.					
4	Parents visit school to follow up pupils' progress.					

C	**Parent–Teacher Communication**	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	Parents regularly communicate with teachers about pupils' progress.					
2	Teachers inform parents about pupils' attendance and behaviour.					
3	Parents respond promptly to communication from the school.					
4	There is regular sharing of academic information between parents and teachers.					
D	**Provision of Scholastic Materials**	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	Parents provide all required school materials for their children.					
2	Pupils attend school with necessary learning materials (books, pens).					
3	Parents support payment for school requirements when needed.					
4	Lack of scholastic materials affects pupils' school attendance.					

SECTION C: LEVEL OF PUPILS' RETENTION

	Statements	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
A	**Regular Attendance**	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	Pupils attend school regularly without frequent absenteeism.					
2	Most pupils attend school throughout the term.					
3	Attendance improves when parents are involved in schooling.					
4	Irregular attendance is common among pupils without parental support.					
B	**Completion Rate**	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	Most pupils progress from lower to upper primary classes.					

2	Pupils are able to complete the primary cycle (P7).					
3	Parental involvement increases pupils' chances of completing school.					
4	Dropout rates are lower in schools with strong parental involvement.					
C	**Reduced Dropout**	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	Few pupils drop out of school before completion.					
2	Parental involvement reduces the likelihood of school dropout.					
3	School dropout is common where parents are less involved.					
4	Pupils remain in school when parents support their education.					
D	**Absenteeism**	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	Absenteeism is low among pupils in this school.					
2	Parental supervision reduces cases of absenteeism.					
3	Pupils frequently miss school when parents are less involved.					
4	School attendance improves when parents monitor pupils closely.					

SECTION D: MODERATING VARIABLES

	Statements	5	4	3	2	1
A	**Socio-Economic Status**	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	Household income affects pupils' school attendance.					
2	Poor families struggle to provide school requirements.					
3	Pupils from low-income families are more likely to miss school.					
4	Socio-economic challenges affect pupils' retention in school.					
B	**Government Policy**	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	Government policies support free primary education in schools.					
2	UPE policy has improved pupils' access to education.					
3	Implementation of education policies affects school attendance.					
4	Government support influences pupils' completion of primary school.					
C	**School Environment**	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1	The school environment is conducive for learning.					
2	Adequate facilities improve pupils' attendance and retention.					
3	Poor school infrastructure affects pupils' motivation to attend school.					
4	A safe school environment encourages pupils to remain in school.					

Thanks for your participation

Appendix III: Interview Guide

Introduction

Dear Participant,

My name is Lakot Christine Canogura, a student of Master of Education in Educational Management at Gulu University. I am conducting a study on parental involvement on pupils' retention in Universal Primary Education schools in Mucwini Sub-county, Kitgum District. This interview is designed to gather in-depth information on parental involvement on pupils' retention in your school and community. The information provided will be used strictly for academic purposes and will be treated with confidentiality. Participation is voluntary, and you may stop the interview at any time.

Interview Questions

1. In your opinion, how does parental involvement influence pupils' attendance and continuation in primary school?
2. What forms of parental involvement are commonly practiced in this school/community.
3. How do parents in this area support their children's learning at home and at school?
4. What challenges limit effective parental involvement in pupils' education in this community?
5. In your experience, how does parental involvement affect pupils' dropout and completion rates?
6. What role does the school play in encouraging or strengthening parental involvement?
7. What measures do you think can improve parental involvement and pupils' retention in this district?

Appendix IV: Introductory Letter

GULU UNIVERSITY

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OFFICE OF THE DEAN, FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMANITIES

19th May 2026

TO : WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to introduce to you Ms. Lakot Christine Canogura (Reg No. 24/U/0673/MED/PS) a student pursuing a programme of study leading to an award Master of Education in Education Management of Gulu University, Master of Gulu University.

She is undertaking research on the Topic:

PARENTAL INVOLEMENT AND PUPILS' RETENTION IN UPE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MUCWINI SUB-COUNTY, KITGUM DISTRICT

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

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

GULU UNIVERSITY
19 MAY 2026
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMANITIES

Yours faithfully,

Assoc. Prof. Denis Thaddeus Ofoyuru
Dean, Faculty of Education and Humanities

Appendix V: Descriptive Statistics for the Moderating Variables

Table 4.15: Descriptive statistics for the moderating variables influencing the relationship between parental involvement on pupils' retention in primary schools in Kitgum District

Socio-Economic Status	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	SD+D (%)	A+SA (%)	Mean	Std Dev
Household income affects pupils' school attendance.	0.0	0.0	10.3	46.2	43.6	0.0	89.8	4.34	0.64
Poor families struggle to provide school requirements.	7.7	5.1	12.8	38.5	35.9	12.8	74.4	3.90	1.26
Pupils from low-income families are more likely to miss school.	0.0	5.4	2.7	54.1	37.8	5.4	91.9	4.24	0.88
Socio-economic challenges affect pupils' retention in school.	2.6	2.6	10.3	64.1	20.5	5.2	84.6	3.98	0.86
Average	2.6	3.3	9.0	50.7	34.5	5.9	85.2	4.12	0.91
Government Policy									
Government policies support free primary education in schools.	0.0	5.1	10.3	33.3	51.3	5.1	84.6	4.31	0.96
UPE policy has improved pupils' access to education.	0.0	5.1	2.6	41.0	51.3	5.1	92.3	4.39	0.89
Implementation of education policies affects school attendance.	2.6	23.1	15.4	41.0	17.9	25.7	58.9	3.49	1.47
Government support influences pupils' completion of primary school.	2.6	5.1	7.7	53.8	30.8	7.7	84.6	4.05	1.01
Average	1.3	9.6	9.0	42.3	37.8	10.9	80.1	4.06	1.08
School Environment									
The school environment is conducive for learning.	0.0	2.6	2.6	48.7	46.2	2.6	94.9	4.39	0.65
Adequate facilities improve pupils' attendance and retention.	0.0	2.6	0.0	50.0	47.4	2.6	97.4	4.42	0.63
Poor school infrastructure affects pupils' motivation to attend school.	0.0	2.6	7.7	41.0	48.7	2.6	89.7	4.36	0.73
A safe school environment encourages pupils to remain in school.	0.0	2.6	2.6	36.8	57.9	2.6	94.7	4.50	0.69
Average	0.0	2.6	3.2	44.1	50.1	2.6	94.2	4.42	0.68

Source: Field Data (2026)