

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

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*Department of Administration and Organization Theory*

## **AORG351**

**Master's Thesis in Public Administration**

**THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE  
IN UGANDA'S PRIMARY EDUCATION:**

**A CASE STUDY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES AND PARENT-  
TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS IN KAYUNGA DISTRICT.**

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**FRANCIS KISEMBO**

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## **ACRONYMS**

CAO.....	Chief Administrative Officer
DEO.....	District Education Officer
LC .....	Local Council
EFA.....	Education For All
GoU.....	Government of Uganda
MDG .....	Millennium Development Goal
NGO.....	Non-Governmental Organization
P.1.....	Primary one
PLE.....	Primary Leaving Examinations
PTA.....	Parent Teacher Association
SMC.....	School Management Committee
UNDP.....	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF.....	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPE .....	Universal Primary Education

## CONCEPTS DEFINED

(I) Academic Performance: Is the outcome of student grading in School assessments wherein students are grouped based on their scores obtained in assessments or examinations that they sat for. Grading is the grouping of students' output in assessments based on their scores. Thus students may be graded in Grades 1, 2 or 3. Therefore when grading is done, students performance is realized. as either high, average or low wherein Grade 1 students reflect high performance, Grade 2 represents average students while Grade 3 signifies low performance. In short without grading, performance cannot be realized.

(II) Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE): These are the annual national examinations in Uganda that are set for all Primary leaving or Primary Seven(P.7) pupils countrywide. Primary Seven(P.7) is the top class of learning in Ugandan Primary Schools. The performance of pupils in these examinations determines their entry into Secondary (Ordinary Level) education. In Uganda these exams are set by the institution known as Uganda National Examinations Board(UNEB).

(III) School-Management Committee(SMC): Is a formal institution that operates at every Universal Primary Education(UPE) School with the sole responsibility of management and implementation of programs to enable or sustain School development. In this study, the SMC is one of the community groups being studied.

(IV) Parent-Teacher Association(PTA): Is a voluntary formal institution consisting of all **parents** having children in a particular Primary School alongside the **teachers** of that School. This institution is a prerequisite for all Primary Schools in Uganda whether or not UPE. The PTA constitutes the second community under study.

(V) Universal Primary Education(UPE): Is the Millennium Development Goal(MDG) that entitles all children aged six years to attain free primary or elementary training in all relevant curriculum areas. Six years is considered the standard age for enrollment in Primary learning.

(VI) Community: Is a collective group of individuals belonging to either the School Management Committee or Parent Teacher Association of a particular Primary School under Universal Primary Education. These are recognized as key stakeholders in the monitoring, mobilization and implementation of the Universal Primary Education(UPE) policy in Uganda.

## **DEDICATION**

This valuable piece of Academic knowledge is dedicated to my dear Parents; Mr. Joseph Byenkya Katuramu Abooki and Mrs. Ruth Katuramu Ruzambira Abwooli. As I was made life through you, you gave me the name 'Kisembo' that signifies a Gift; therefore to you my lovely Parents, this is a Gift to you that you will be proud of forever.

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## Abstract

Primary Education is the cornerstone of secondary and higher education. A good foundation laid down in the elementary years of education will provide a backbone for a fruitful learning experience in preceding higher contexts. For what use does a dysfunctional elementary training serve other than undermine the capacity of children to grasp basic knowledge and skills? Accordingly, statesmen worldwide have adopted policies that expose their citizens to free Primary education so as to curb illiteracy levels right from the basic level. Equally vital is the need for continuous monitoring and implementation of development programs in Schools offering Universal Primary Education(UPE). But this job has proved quite complex for the statesmen to handle singlehandedly. As a result, Governments worldwide realized the need for and formalized decentralized education systems marked by the recruitment of community actors to serve as Government substitutes in managing and implementing development programs in UPE Schools. Despite these efforts by Governments alongside communities, what is striking is the academic performance trend among UPE Schools in developing countries. The performance levels reflect that most UPE Schools register three quarters of their pupils having below average scores in academic examinations. In Uganda one indicator of such low performance is observed among several pupils being unable to construct a single sentence in English language which is the language of instruction. This is particularly observed among the UPE Schools. Could this be the result of the substitutes(communities) failing to undertake their responsibilities?

This study therefore was conducted to determine the effectiveness of decentralized education in particular community involvement in promoting pupil achievement. There is a common assertion that '*community participation advances School performance*'. However as this research discovered, this assumption does not apply to all contexts. In other words, certain Schools whose communities are highly participatory will realize good performance as compared to those Schools whose communities are less participatory. Thus as this Thesis argues, it is better to assert that '*highly participatory communities will advance School performance*.' A central part in this Thesis indicates the various community-stakeholder responsibilities under the Universal Primary Education policy of Uganda. These responsibilities were identified through documentary analysis. Indeed with this knowledge on the responsibilities of School Management

Committees(SMC) and Parent-Teacher Associations(PTA), I was able to undertake firsthand investigations in relation to community activities in two UPE Schools and how these activities promote or undermine pupil achievement in School assessments. This in turn enabled adequate comparisons to be done between the selected two Schools. Analysis emerged on the challenges facing the communities in their fulfillment of tasks. Analysis was as well done in regards to the determinants influencing the level of academic performance in Ugandan UPE Schools. One of these determinants is community participation. These determinants were specifically analyzed at the two selected Schools. Knowledge from this analysis enabled a similar analysis on the extent to which community involvement promotes or undermines academic performance.

The findings of the study nonetheless indicated that despite the perceptions of the parent-teacher association(PTA) and School management(SMC) that '*community practice is necessary for school development and academic progress*', some UPE Schools lack well-defined and active community activities. In short, it should not be falsely generalized that all community involvement undertaken automatically promotes performance. Rather it depends on community practices that are well-stipulated, supportive and active. This means it is essential to understand the two sides of the coin. The coin in this case is community participation in school performance. One side of the coin indicates high and supportive community programs in a particular School whereas the other coin side reveals a non-supportive program from the community personnel in another School. This in turn inflicts a stagnant and gradual decline in the School performance of such Schools with non-supportive community activities. In other word community involvement may be instrumental to School performance but may as well impair quality learning.

# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION AND STUDY BACKGROUND

## 1.0 Introduction

The Objective of this empirical inquiry was to '*examine the impact of community participation on Academic Performance of UPE Schools in Uganda.*' This study focuses on a growing theme; *community involvement in classroom instruction.* Epstein(2011), a popular scholar in this field notes that parental involvement as a form of community participation in elementary schools advances pupil success while at the same time reduces the barriers to quality learning that crop up in schools which if not addressed will bear negative consequences on student-achievement outcomes. Desforges & Abouchaar(2003) maintain that community participation as a theme entails several actors with diverse responsibilities, making it essential to specify which community groups one is focusing on in their study. Accordingly in this study, the School Management Committee(SMC) and Parent-Teacher Association(PTA) constitute the forms of community involvement. The purpose of this chapter is to display the preliminary decisions undertaken in order to argue the case for a study examining the impact of community involvement on school performance. This necessitated building relevant research questions that would enable the fulfillment of the overall study objective. Nonetheless it was integral to define the background explaining this research, display the relevance of knowledge advanced from this research as well as a summarized indication of what stages or fulfillments were undertaken to make this study feasible or a reality.

## 1.1 Study Background

Studying community participation in modern day education necessitates identifying the policy changes in the education sector that have engulfed the global scene overtime. During the period of 1960s, research on community participation in education was primarily conducted on a wide scale. These large scale studies include those conducted by the central advisory council(1967) and the Coleman study(1966) where the attention focused on family and local authorities' involvement as well as the socio-economic status of these personnel. Following these undertakings, policy makers focused on implementing mechanisms that would minimize

inequalities among school communities(Coleman, 1966). This was to be achieved by promoting the socio-economic status of remote community groups to satisfactory levels (Coleman, 1966).

On a similar note, studies conducted on student achievement within the period 1960 to late 70s reflected that the socio-economic status of the students influenced greatly their ability to realize quality performance. These studies were conducted on twelve countries by(Husen, 1975) and later, the International Student Achievement Program; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development(OECD, 2011). Attention was placed on the performance outcomes of students in terms of Mathematical counting and English pronunciation. The results of both studies revealed uniform conclusions that the students from high socio-economic backgrounds obtained high scores whereas their counterparts from lower backgrounds were below the average score rate(Husen,1975; International Student Achievement Program; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2011).

Over the last decade, education has been considered as an accomplishment to achieving development worldwide (UNDP). Accordingly, the main agenda setting in education worldwide concerns *increasing the quantity of pupils accessing basic Primary education*. This is defined by the United Nations Development Program(UNDP) as Universal Primary Education(UPE) and has been adopted by several Governments globally. More importantly, the UNDP set the target for achieving Universal Primary Education as 2015 (UNDP, 2012). However following the implementation of Universal Primary Education, challenges have surfaced most notably; matching high enrollment with quality performance(Munene,2009). Therefore research has been undertaken to identify hazardous practices that may hinder quality learning in UPE schools(Ezenne, 2012). Uganda has not escaped this experience as evidenced by the excessively high pupil enrollment vis-à-vis declining academic performance in UPE Schools. Other aspects of this experience in Uganda are the high dropout rates and teacher absenteeism especially among remotely located UPE Schools(Munene,2009). All this has placed a strain on UPE achieving success in Uganda.

Accordingly, the Government of Uganda (GoU) formalized community participation as an innovation to ensure the supervision, management and implementation of all aspects of Universal Primary Education (UPE Stakeholder Handbook, 2004). These communities are the School management committee(SMC) and parent-teacher association(PTA). These communities

operate alongside other non community stakeholders as will be discussed later. It is relevant to note however that these two community groups had earlier been in operation since the Uganda's independence in 1962. In other words they are not a new phenomena. What is significant is that SMCs and PTAs were not as dominant in the past as they are now. This improved dominance was enabled by the GoU redefining their responsibilities to accommodate supervisory and managerial roles. The logic is that these responsibilities will curb the magnitude of vices or hindrances that are cropping up among UPE Schools.

## 1.2 Research Focus

Policy commentators on Universal Primary Education continuously argue that the activities of teachers need to be complimented with community practices if pupil performance is to be realized(Marja & Rao, 2011). This means that regular teaching needs to be reinforced by a similar regularity in supervision, management and parental involvement(Kasente, 2010).

Similarly commentaries on UPE highlight that unless community groups undertake their tasks fully, achieving School development will remain an illusion(Ezenne, 2012). Achieving high academic performance under UPE is a vital indicator of quality learning. However this requires each actor in charge of planning, supervision, resource mobilization, teaching and policy implementation to fulfill his or her responsibilities(Kasente,2010).

## 1.3 Research Value

There are no rules that define what topic of study a researcher should or should not pursue (King et al, 1994). As it is argued, the "rules of choice at the preliminary stages of the research process are less formalized than the rules for other preceding research activities" (King et al, 1994, p.14). Thus the choice pursued by a researcher on what topic of study is dependent on a researcher's own creativity and interest (King et al, 1994). Following this assertion by King et al (1994), it would appear that selecting a topic such as 'the impact of community participation on academic performance' was based on my interest in the field of study. Despite this assertion, King et al (1994) develop two criteria that I considered as relevant in selecting this topic and which as well aid in explaining the significance of my research. These two criteria are (I) *a study must create a research question which is relevant to the "real world"* (King et al, 1994, p.15) and (II) *a study*

*must be able to create valid explanations of phenomena in the contemporary world and by doing so, add value to the already existing literature around that phenomena*(King et al, 1994).

In regards to criteria (I), my research questions as will be indicated centered on academic performance alongside community participation. Achieving academic performance remains the primary objective of Primary schools globally. In short, as pupils are educated they are tested through regular school assessments with each respective school targeting quality performance. Thus this study in one part explains what factors foster or undermine academic performance. Similarly community involvement has emerged in education sectors world over. Participation is an activity operating under the Universal Primary Education policy. Therefore following the reforms in Primary education towards a universal system, the responsibility of Schools is no longer limited to Government officials, but rather the collective work of School Management committees, local authorities, teachers and parents. This is what King et al (1994) state as a topic having consequences on the social life or politics of a society.

In relation to criterion (II), it must be appreciated that research on communities within the education sector is quite low in the developing world(Suzuki, 2002). This is in particular to the School Management Committees wherein the attention has been placed on the developed world(Malen& Ogawa, 1988; Deem et al, 1995; Suzuki, 2002) with low levels of research in the developing world. This indicates the gap in existing knowledge that I seek to address. Specifically Suzuki(2002) contends that the developing world has not been subjected to quite a number of extensive research on School Management committees besides those by Preston(1991), Maha(1997) and Rivarola & Fuller (1999). Nonetheless studies are emerging in the developing world that highlight the role of Community participation in Schools. Over the years, studies by Fushieni(2005) and Masue(2010) from the Department of Administration & Organization Theory, University of Bergen, Norway have broadened this scope of work. Therefore this research will add to the already existing Scientific knowledge at an institutional level. This is because the theoretical premises applied in both studies are incorporated in my research as will be discussed in a latter section. Thus King et al (1994) assert that for a study to be significant, it must indicate that "theories designed for some purpose in one literature could be applied in another literature to solve an existing but apparently unrelated problem" (King et al, 1994, p.17).

## 1.4 Research Questions

Having provided a justification of the need to pursue research on community involvement in Primary Schools, I proceed to state the Objective and specific research questions of the study. As already highlighted, the overall objective of my study was to "*examine the impact of community participation on academic performance*". More specifically within the context of Universal Primary Education(UPE), the research questions posed were:

- (I) Has the academic performance in UPE Schools improved?
- (II) What determinants influence the level of academic performance in UPE Schools?
- (III) What are the forms of community participation that operate in UPE?
- (IV) What are the responsibilities of School Management Committees(SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations(PTAs)?
- (V) To what extent do the SMCs and PTAs fulfill their responsibilities?
- (VI) What is the impact of SMC and PTA participation on Academic Performance?

In order to address these questions which are focusing on two complex concepts; participation and performance, the qualitative methodology was adopted with emphasis on case study design. Qualitative case study design enabled an investigation into the deeper meaning of both concepts, after which explanations linking the two concepts were made. It would have been insufficient to rely on mere explanations without first understanding the diverse meanings of the phenomena.

### 1.4.1 Rationale of Research Questions

As already stated, the significance of this research is that it enables contextualization of "real world phenomena" (King et al, 1994, p.15); community participation and academic performance. Similarly I attach significance to each of the 6 research questions in terms of *real world exposure* and *generation of scientific knowledge*.

Accordingly therefore, the first 4 research questions (I, II, III, IV) enabled the exposure and adequate discussion on community participation and academic performance. This is because each of the 4 questions examined a particular aspect in relation to the two phenomenon. It must also be noted that the two phenomenon were discussed globally alongside narrowing down on the context of this research; Uganda.

On the other hand questions V and VI demonstrated scientific knowledge. This is because measurements were undertaken to determine the extent and impact of community involvement in UPE Schools. Measurement is a method analogous to the scientific community. The forms of measurements applied are stated in the methodology and analysis chapters respectively. More importantly, firsthand collection of data characterized the fieldwork phase that sought evidence for questions V and VI. Thus I minimized the risk of having to rely on narrative data. Similarly, scientific knowledge was gathered based on the observable(firsthand) experience as opposed to the unobservable(narrations).

#### **1.4.2 Relevance of Research Questions to Overall Objective**

This section discusses the relevance of each research question stated above to the overall objective of study. This ensures that appropriate questions are adopted and which are compatible with the study objective. This will enable proper measurement of the research objective by adopting questions that maximize the collection of relevant data in relation to the research objective.

Research question (I) sought to determine the level of academic performance in the two Primary schools studied. With academic performance as the dependent variable, it was necessary to measure the pupil performance in both schools so as to be able to categorize either school as high or low performing school. However beyond a mere determination of the schools' performance levels, the interest in this question was in analyzing how much improvement if any that has been realized over a specific time frame. From this therefore either of the two schools' performance will be regarded as improving, stagnant or declining.

Research question (II) focused on identifying and discussing the relevant factors that can both support or undermine the quality of learning under UPE Schools. In this research, these factors are termed as 'determinants of academic performance.' This question therefore incorporated

literature discussions on what features support or undermine pupil performance in elementary school such as facilities, teacher manpower and scholastic aids. The argument of this question is that besides community participation, there are other features within a school that may determine the level of performance realized.

Research question (III) measures the independent variable, 'community participation' in the context of two UPE Schools. This was important in understanding the different but relevant personnel that are mandated to participate in School development. This is necessary in understanding that despite the label 'community', there exist different groups such as the School Management Committee(SMC) and Parent-Teacher Association(PTA) that occupy different but vital roles towards school performance. In short, a community is more than one group and is not a single monolithic entity. This forms the basis for research question (IV) that sought to discuss the roles or duties performed by each of the two groups (SMC and PTA) towards School performance. In other words how do community responsibilities relate to School performance and development.

Research question (V) was determined on the basis of data gained from question (IV). In other words, the extent of community involvement was determined in relation to the community responsibilities identified by research question(IV). Therefore both communities from each respective School were examined in relation to their responsibilities defined under the Ugandan Education Act, 2008. This in turn formed the basis for research question (VI) on the impact of community participation on academic performance. Thus based on the extent to which communities in both Schools meet their duties (responsibility fulfillment), the impact of community participation on academic performance (research question VI) was determined. The argument under research question (VI) is that a high community participation will foster performance vis-à-vis low participation that undermines pupil performance.

## **1.5 Research Context and Rationale**

The research was conducted in the geographical boundaries of Uganda located in East Africa. I was motivated to pursue this study in Uganda based on the earlier studies conducted by former **Master of Philosophy(M.Phil)** students at the **Department of Administration & Organization Theory, University of Bergen**. These are Fushieni(2005) and Masue(2010). Thus the

**Department of Administration & Organization Theory at University of Bergen** contains a rich tradition on research undertaken in areas like community participation, trust, policy implementation and administrative culture to mention but a few. Fushieni's (2005) study *explored the role of community participation in basic School development*, with the focus being on 2 Junior Secondary Schools located in Ghana. On the other hand Masue(2010) explored *the effectiveness of School Management Committees* in Tanzania. From the two studies therefore, I found it necessary to implement an empirical study on community participation in Uganda's Primary education so as to offer comparison prospects with Ghana and Tanzania. Through comparison of the three studies by either differences or similarities, knowledge may be achieved.

More specifically, considering the time frame of field work, it was not realistic to conduct research throughout the entire Districts of Uganda. Rather one District by the names of **Kayunga** constituted the favorable setting from which two UPE schools were drawn. Thus in selecting **Kayunga** District, I had earlier noted that studies conducted in Uganda in relation to UPE Schools seemed to focus on **Kampala** District, which as of present day houses the Capitol City. But as I have observed throughout my lifetime in Uganda, **Kampala** District is characterized by urban and semi-urban towns. It is uncommon to witness a rural or remote setting in Kampala. . This formed the basis to shift attention away from the boundaries of Kampala. so as to portray the experiences in the rural settings of Uganda. **Kayunga** District though containing a few urban centers like **Kangulumira**, provides a landscape of rural settings such as **Busaana** that altogether constituted the area location of study.

### **1.5.1 Uganda at a Glance.**

It is important to disclose a few but necessary descriptions of the geographical context of my research; Uganda. This is a country to which I am a native. Therefore it would be a misguided assumption to assume that every reader to this Thesis knows Uganda whether by its location, population or Government set up. Therefore to avoid this assumption, I present a few key descriptions of Uganda.

### **1.5.2 Location of Uganda**

Uganda is located in East Africa and is one of five countries termed as the East African Community (Ezenne, 2012). Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi constitute the other

countries under the East African Community of states (Ezenne, 2012). According to the 2011 population census, Uganda constituted a population of approximately "34,000,000" (Ezenne,2012,p.1). Uganda shares boundaries with Tanzania and Rwanda to the south, Democratic Republic of Congo to the west, Kenya to the east and the Republic of south Sudan to the North as indicated by the map on the preceding page. Within its internal boundaries, Uganda is comprised of 111 Districts as of 2013 with one district Kampala serving as the Capital City. As Ezenne (2012) notes, majority of these districts acquire their initials from the major business centers and constituencies within each of them. Therefore it is important to note as well that within a particular District reside several constituencies whether counties and sub-counties alongside parishes and sub-parishes. A summary of the geographical districts are indicated in the map on the preceding page:-

**A map of Uganda showing the internal districts and neighboring states**



(Source: World Facts)

### 1.5.3 Institutional Framework of Governance in Uganda

Uganda is a Republic state. The Government is headed by a President as Head of state, and as of present President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni is the Head of state. Equally involved are Cabinet Ministers, who are appointed by the Head of State. The Head of State together with the Cabinet ministers form the executive branch of Government. In addition, there exists the Legislative arm of Government represented by a Parliamentary body comprised of Members of Parliament who represent the different and numerous localities in the Country(Ezenne,2012). Thirdly is the Judiciary that serves as the legal arm of Government and as a reflection of the 'rule of Law' in Uganda. This judiciary is earmarked by Judges who are appointed to serve at the High Court in Kampala city. These appointments are done by the Head of State.

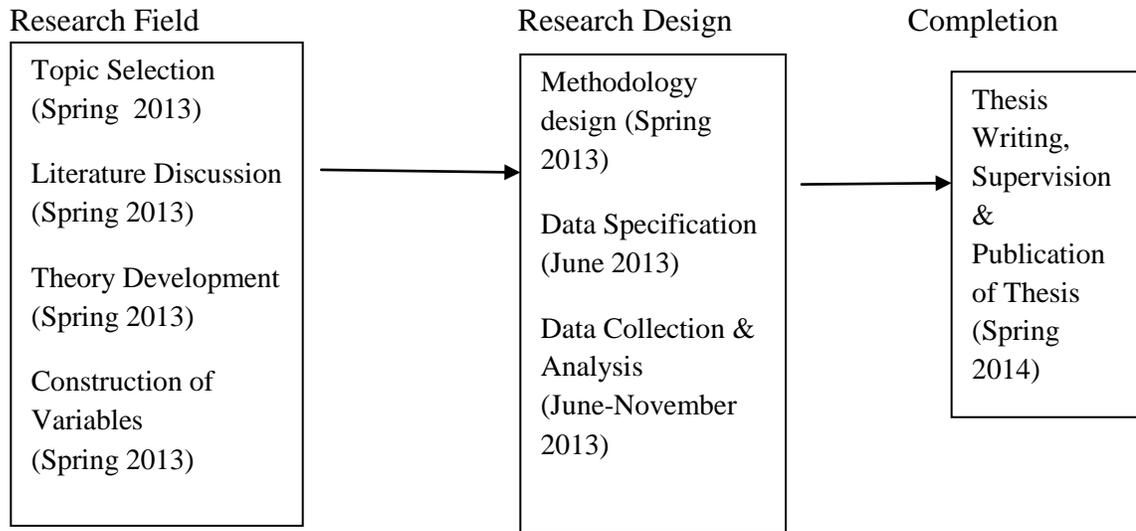
Besides the formal branch of Government, there exists the Private Sector comprised of large scale investors both nationals and foreigners. Their relevance is crucial along three lines, Firstly they provide employment to a large section of Ugandans who are unemployed in Government. Secondly they contribute large sums of revenue to the economy of Uganda. Thirdly, these investors as a result of amassing wealth of experience serve as Special advisers to Government on developmental matters. Thus they constitute a large section of Consultants to the Government in Uganda.

It must be noted however that **Kayunga** District is just one of several Districts containing a few semi-urban and majorly remote areas. However I had to put into consideration language interpretation and this eliminated the choice of several other Districts that were not language friendly. In Uganda, language is based on cultural denominations that in turn occupy the different Districts respectively. In other words each District in **Uganda** provides a habitat or settlement area for different cultures. Having lived in **Kayunga** District for two years while undertaking work-related duties, I familiarized myself with the native language widely spoken in the District. This language is known as **Luganda**. Knowledge of this language offered a prospectus for establishing rapport.

### 1.6 Research Process Summary

The research process entails a chain of procedures that demonstrate the processes undertaken to successfully complete this project. For the purpose of clarity I present these processes in a

"linear"(Burnham et al, 2008, p.45) framework. The purpose of the figure 1.6 below is to indicate the academic journey undertaken to contribute scientific knowledge to the Scholarly community by making this research a reality.



The research field ensured the identification of realistic and feasible study themes. Similarly identification of literature and theory supporting the need for the study were identified and examined alongside specification of the variables to be measured.

The research design initiated two frameworks, the first being a theoretical one in terms of a proposed design of the methodology to be undertaken for data collection and analysis. The second framework was a practical one which entailed implementing the proposed research field and design proposals so as to make this study a reality. Following the instrumental guidance from my supervisor and instructors, the Thesis structure was worked out, written and published marking a successful journey.

## 1.7 Thesis Structure

Having presented the background, focus, value, research questions, context and a summary of research process of the study, I proceed to indicate the preceding chapters and their focus:

### **Chapter Two: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.**

In this chapter, discussions apply to both the global context as well as Uganda as the context of study. A specific discussion is made on the background and current context of the Universal

Primary Program(UPE) in Uganda. From this emerges a broad description of decentralization with a specific focus on decentralization in the education sector. This has given birth to community participation in education. Thus the composition of communities in UPE is discussed in order to understand who the actors are and what responsibilities they perform. This chapter is concluded with an explanation and rationale of the theories that provide the conceptual basis for the research. From stating these theories, variables both independent and dependent are stated.

### **Chapter Three: METHODOLOGY**

This chapter highlights and justifies the methodological choices undertaken prior to and during fieldwork. Specification is made on Case Study design, qualitative methodology, qualitative data instruments and specification of data that was to be obtained from each instrument. The samples of the study are included as well as a reflection of efforts made to establish rapport. Field work related problems are specified. The chapter is concluded with a section highlighting the measures that were undertaken to ensure and promote validity and reliability in the study, not forgetting ethical considerations.

### **Chapter Four: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN UGANDAN UPE SCHOOLS : ANALYSIS OF KANGULUMIRA C/U PRIMARY SCHOOL (KPS) & NAKAKANDWA R/C PRIMARY SCHOOL(NPS).**

This is the first chapter that presents data from the field as well as the analysis of that data. The specification here is on the dependent variable; academic performance in the two selected UPE Schools Kayunga District. Thus statistics indicating the performance levels are displayed with respect to each School. After which, the determinants influencing the level of performance in both Schools are discussed in respect to each School. The chapter concludes with a comparison of both Schools in-terms of academic performance levels and School resources.

### **Chapter Five : COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE: ANALYSIS OF MULTIPLE PRACTICES IN KANGULUMIRA C/U PRIMARY SCHOOL(KPS) AND NAKAKANDWA R/C PRIMARY SCHOOL(NPS).**

This is the second chapter that deals with data and analysis. The attention here is on the independent variable; community participation in the two UPE Schools in Kayunga District.

Thus the School Management Committees(SMC) and Parent Teacher Associations(PTA) from each respective School are analyzed in terms of their responsibilities towards School progress. From this will emerge an analysis into the factors contributing to or constraining the level of community participation at each respective School. The chapter concludes with a section on the comparison of community participation from both Schools so as to identify where the difference if any occurs.

**Chapter Six: THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: ANALYSIS OF KANGULUMIRA C/U PRIMARY SCHOOL(KPS) and NAKAKANDWA R/C PRIMARY SCHOOL(NPS).**

Having focused on academic performance and community participation in chapters four and five respectively, this is the final chapter on data and analysis that focuses on explaining the effect of community responsibilities on the academic performance of both Schools.

**Chapter Seven: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS.**

This is the final Thesis chapter that revisits the literature and theoretical discussions in an attempt to relate them with the findings and analysis from chapters four, five and six. In other words, what is the theoretical implication on chapters four, five and six. From this I will conclude by offering prospects for further research that may be pursued by other researchers with similar interests.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

The purpose of this chapter is in highlighting the diverse debates and theories surrounding community participation in education. This chapter is assigned three parts. The first part concerns highlighting the major issues relating to community participation in education. The second part of discussion shall focus on examining the different forms of community involvement that can be deduced from the theoretical frameworks of this research. These frameworks constitute the Epstein's Involvement framework, Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation and World Bank's empowerment indicators. The third and final part in this chapter will provide a discussion on the variables adopted in this study.

#### 2.0 Literature Review Introduction.

To begin with, Haywood & Wragg (1982) emphasize the relevance of a literature review as a means of showcasing knowledge on a topical issue that is the focus of a researcher's study. In this first part of chapter two is a discussion on the meanings of community participation alongside locating the background of UPE in Uganda and its features that have become a common spectacle among UPE Schools in Uganda. To ensure this, the literature review will examine the main issues relating to community participation forms and responsibilities while at the same time highlighting the major determinants of academic performance under UPE Schools specifically in Uganda. In doing so it shall generate answers to research questions II, III and IV respectively focusing on; *what determinants influence the level of academic performance in UPE Schools? what are the forms of community participation in UPE? and what are the responsibilities of the School Management Committee(SMC) and Parent- Teacher Association(PTA)?* Part one of this chapter begins with a discussion on the background of community participation, which as will be discussed is decentralization. After which shall follow the discussion on two concepts; communities and participation. These two concepts nonetheless are combined both in theory and practice to mean community participation. More importantly, community participation is often labeled as an indicator of decentralized practices alongside democratic principles in societies. The responsibilities of communities cited will be highlighted. Of significant discussion shall be the aspect of UPE in Uganda which ensures that academic

performance as a dependent variable is well digested in literature. This is in particular to the determinants of academic performance in UPE schools.

At the end of this first part, it is expected that an adequate understanding is exhibited in relation to key concepts; community participation and academic performance and that the readers will be well informed about these concepts. With this, it is hoped that there will emerge an explicit focus and need as to why a study on community participation in UPE was relevant. The first part to this chapter kicks off with a discussion on decentralization which as will be reflected, accounts for community involvement in education. After which will emerge a discussion into the dynamics of community participation in its general sense and in turn with specific reference to Uganda. Having discussed community participation and its background, the first part of this chapter will be concluded with an examination on UPE in Uganda and the structure of learning inherent within UPE schools. This approach will ensure that both the independent variable (community participation) and dependent variable (academic performance) are adequately examined in terms of the relevant available literature.

## **2.1 Decentralization: A background to Community Participation in education.**

The importance of community participation in the School management process has gained prominence with the onset of decentralized education (Suzuki, 2002). Just as participation acquires different meanings, decentralization has not escaped these debates as evidenced by literature by Rondinelli (1981), Weiler (1989) and Lauglo (1995). Decentralization in essence concerns the transfer of responsibilities hierarchically from higher authority to the locals (Suzuki, 2002). The implication of this is bringing the "decision-making" (Suzuki, 2002, p.244) process much nearer to the local communities which in so doing is viewed as an avenue for democracy. The policies of decentralization throughout Sub Saharan Africa emphasize or reflect the transfer of responsibility for public needs from a higher to lower tier Public Administration (Jutting et al, 2004; Prinsen & Tileca, 2008 cited by PAD, 2008, vol.28, p.149). Similarly Rondinelli's model of decentralization views decentralization as a shift in authority, roles and resources from centralized government institutions to localized branches of government (Jutting et al, 2004; Prinsen & Tileca, 2008 cited by PAD, 2008, vol.28). As a result this view by Rondinelli bears implications in which the dominance of the central government over the shifted roles and

resources are reduced overtime. According to Rondinelli therefore, for this to occur, the decentralization process must transform through "decentralization to delegation, to devolution and then to privatization"(Rondinelli et al, 1983, p.14; Rondinelli, 1999, p.4; Prinsen & Titeca, 2008; PAD, 2008, P.150). It must be noted however that despite several researchers adhering to Rondinelli's working definition, several scholars isolate the privatization as a form of decentralization. This is because the shift in responsibility and resources to the private sector would mean that the objective of the resources are the responsibility of the private sector as opposed to the entire Public (Prinsen & Tileca, 2008; PAD, 2008, vol.28). This view of privatization is therefore perceived to be external or outside the focus of " Public Policy and Administration" (Ribot, 2001, p.1; Prinsen & Tileca, 2008; PAD, 2008, vol.28,p.150). Decentralization is regarded as a dissatisfaction or alternative to "centralized governance"(Rondinelli et al, 1989; Dyer & Rose, 2005, p.105). Decentralization in its operation encompasses transfer and distribution of "authority, responsibilities and resources" (Dyer & Rose, 2005, p.106). Throughout several decades have arisen debates as to the meaning and objectives of decentralized reforms. These debates however did not necessarily incorporate education as a focal point, but are crucial to understanding and bear consequences for a decentralized education sector.(Dyer & Rose, 2005).

From 1962 onwards, international organizations like the United Nations(UN) as well as the World Bank regularly emphasized that a decentralized public sector promotes development (Gunnarsson et al, 2009; EDCC,2009, Vol.58). In other wards decentralization would act as a "decentralized strategy"(ibid, p.25). Overtime it has emerged that a decentralized policy has gained momentum across states with a specific reference to the education sector as the subject of decentralization.

The reform towards a decentralized education system worldwide owes its existence to the growing perception that *local participation and control of Schools promotes student achievement ceteris paribus* (Gunnarsson et al, 2009 cited by EDCC, 2009, Vol.58). However some researchers among the scholarly community argue that although a decentralized policy may enhance the allocation of resources to address community needs, the evidence does not necessarily indicate whether or not the desired solutions or outcomes are realized (Gunnarsson et al, 2009 cited by EDCC, 2009, Vol.58). Thus within the education sector, research conducted

indicates that local participation and control does not produce the same desired results at every school where the policy(local participation) is in operation(ibid). In short, decentralized education benefits some Schools unlike others and is therefore not a win-win situation, but rather a zero-sum game.

As such, Gunnarsson et al(2009) in EDCC(2009) assert that there are certain hindrances that disable local participation(decentralization) from enhancing positive outcomes. As Bardhan(2002) argues, local participation and control are likely to be undermined in the developing countries (Bardhan, 2002 in Gunnarsson et al, 2009 cited by EDCC, 2009, Vol.58). Two explanations to this are provided. Firstly, local authorities may be exposed to high influence from wealthy and famous families who demand the diversion of community resources to their specific or family needs(Gunnarsson et al, 2009 cited by EDCC, 2009, Vol.58). Secondly, local authorities most of whom are non-professional do not possess the expertise in effectively allocating resources. This is made worse by the absence of Monitoring and Supervision officials to regularly examine the activities of the local authorities. This in turn has minimized any prospects for accountability of the community leaders (ibid).

Within the education sector, decentralization occurs through shifting the financial responsibilities such as budgeting and handling to the Local Government and communities (Bray,1996 cited by Suzuki, 2002). Besides financial responsibility, decentralization in education occurs through increased access to the decision-making process by the School management committees (Mankoe & Maynes, 1994 in Suzuki, 2002). Furthermore, Gunnarsson et al(2009) in EDCC(2009) label the ingredients of a decentralized education as consisting of "community based school financing, initiating performance-based financing, deregulating the choice of school books and scholastic materials"(Gunnarsson et al, 2009 cited by EDCC, 2009, Vol.58, p.29). Equally important is the transfer of "responsibility in decision making"(Gunnarsson et al, 2009 cited by EDCC, 2009, Vol.58, p.29) from the Central Government to community personnel. These include Head-teachers, teachers, parents and local area councilors (ibid). It must also be appreciated that the scope of local control, decision making or responsibility consists of designing curricula, defining performance standards, reviewing student records, choice of scholastic material and security (Gunnarsson et al, 2009 in EDCC, 2009, Vol.58).

There are four important statements that need to be taken into consideration when examining the relationship between decentralized policy and academic achievement in Schools. These are:-

(I) Autonomy in Schools alongside parental involvement vary at high degrees within rather than between countries. This indicates that the local choices of particular individual groups in society as opposed to countrywide choices is what forms the basis of decentralization to operate. In short decentralization is dependent on the local population as opposed to the general population(Gunnarson et al, 2009 in EDCC, 2009, Vol.58).

(II) Empirical inquiries indicate that Schools operating in local areas and having literate or highly knowledgeable parents or guardians, will most likely adopt autonomous control, enable high parental involvement and mobilize large quantities of School needs. On the contrary, Schools lacking in autonomous controls will function but experience limitations in realizing development and pupil progress(Gunnarson et al, 2009 in EDCC, 2009, Vol.58).

(III) Schools having autonomy do not automatically score highly on examinations. Equally important are resource facilitation and regular parental participation(Gunnarson et al, 2009 in EDCC, 2009, Vol.58).

(IV) Devolution of authority and responsibility to local personnel in Schools cannot be effected by relying single-handedly on Central Government regulations. This devolution process must draw in the local perspectives as well(Gunnarson et al, 2009 in EDCC, 2009, Vol.58).

The operative framework for decentralization in Uganda is evidenced by the “*Local Government Statute of 1993, the Constitution of 1995 and the Local Government Act of 1997*” (Francis&James, 2003, p.327). These legal statutes mandate the transfer of responsibility from Central government to Local Councils at Village, Parish, Sub County, County and District levels.

As part of an effort to establish a decentralized education, the Government of Uganda established the Education Sector Investment Plan (1997-2003). The aim of this plan was to enable investments in Primary Education(IOB Impact Evaluation, 2008). Accordingly one of the six priorities of this plan was increasing the “involvement of local authorities and community groups in the Primary Education sector” (IOB Impact evaluation, 2008, p.44). Important to note is that these investments targeted learning infrastructure like classroom construction, monitoring and

supervision of teachers as well as proposing solutions to problems hindering performance of pupils while at school (IOB Impact Evaluation, 2008).

Bray (2003) categorizes decentralization as either “functional or territorial” (Dyer & Rose, 2005, p.106). Functional decentralization entails transfer of responsibilities among authorities working within the same unit for instance creating different departments within a single Ministry (Dyer & Rose, 2005). Territorial decentralization entails a shift in responsibility from “higher to lower geographical tiers of government” that is to say “national, regional, district and school levels” (Dyer & Rose, 2005, p.106). In this regard, community participation in Primary Education can be seen as operating under territorial decentralization, as community groups in different districts assume responsibilities in Primary Schools.

Proponents of decentralization argue that performance within schools can be bettered through shifting responsibility and decision making closer to the unit, in this case Primary Schools where decisions are to be made (Dyer & Rose, 2005). This is what explains the presence of SMCs and PTAs in Primary Schools in Uganda. However the decision making model leans more towards the School committees rather than the Parents or Teachers. The PTA has more to do with discussions on matters pertaining to pupil wellbeing and ways to better their performance.

### **2.1.1 Assumptions of Decentralization**

From the previous discussion on the meaning and function of decentralization. Decentralization is built on two assumptions. Firstly, decentralization promotes democratic practices by enabling the local citizenry per take in decision making responsibilities (World Bank, 2003). Secondly, decentralization promotes effective and efficient public service delivery which in turn enables the Public servants to attain accountability from the individuals in society (Rondinelli, 1981).

It is important to note however that these assumptions are made based on three expectations (Robinson, 2007). Firstly, authority and defined responsibilities have to be shifted from Government leaders to the local elite who oversee the wellbeing of their particular localities (Robinson, 2007). Secondly, financial assets have to be accessible so as to enable service delivery to the localities. This according to Robinson (2007) occurs through transferring financial responsibilities in particular taxation and fiscal planning to the local leaders. Thirdly, as

a result of acquiring clout both politically and economically, the local authorities are able to ensure efficient supply of basic needs regularly in their constituencies(Robinson, 2007).

Equally relevant as a point of reference is that the assumptions on decentralization are as well dependent on the assumptions that are encountered during the public service delivery(Murphy, 1993). In other words in case the assumptions of the local service delivery do not occur, then the broader assumptions or expectations of decentralization will be undermined. A case in point is that the local authorities who acquire power from Government may control the service delivery at the local level and as well monopolize any benefits realized(Murphy, 1993). This is a challenge to decentralization theorists who argue that transfer and exchange of authority or responsibilities ensures that power sharing is not misused(Murphy, 1993). However as explained, the local leaders may fully control the service provision and undermine other community leaders who deserve to be part of the power sharing game. Rondinelli et al (1989) expresses a similar line of argument by asserting that local leaders who maximize absolute control over administrative decisions risk incorporating corruption and office mismanagement in the service delivery at a local level.

It is often argued that decentralization effects Democracy and Good Governance as well as development(Litvack et al, 1998). However despite this common assertion, it has also been argued that the reverse is true. In other words, a fully fledged democratic society characterized by institutional development creates a conducive platform for decentralized practices to be implemented(Oyugi, 2000).

From this discussion therefore it is relevant to argue that for decentralization to be effective necessitates certain prerequisites which are non-existent in several contexts where decentralization is adopted. Furthermore, for Good Governance principles to be implemented smoothly necessitates prior existence of decentralized practice in societies seeking democracy. However as Litvack et al(1998) argues, State leaders seeking democratic practices rarely draw upon this line of thought and instead often reflect on notions like *rule of Law* and *free & fair elections*, without paying heed to decentralization.

### **2.1.2 Decentralization Influenced by Neo-Liberalism**

State monopoly in the 1980s was labeled as undermining efficiency and rather promoting inefficiency in society(Mohan & Stokke, 2000). As a result, there emerged wide spread demand for Neo-Liberal state practice that fosters private ownership as well as power sharing(Mohan & Stokke, 2000). The demand for this was based on the argument that non-interference in the markets would promote effective and efficient service delivery to the public(Mohan & Stokke, 2000). Other theorists on Public choice view decentralized practices as an alternative to liberal economies based on market control. Thus the argument here is that a decentralized platform socializes customers(citizens) and retailers(local authorities) ensuring that the many tastes and preferences of the customers are effectively supplied by the retailers(Rondinelli et al, 1989; Litvack et al, 1998). In short the citizen demands within a country according to this neo-liberal approach are better served by local Government or private sector as opposed to Central Government(Wade, 1990). This results in the minimization of responsibilities by the state. However despite this minimization, the state remains crucial in shaping and funding the institutions that operate with the market oriented ideology(Wade, 1990).

### **2.1.3 Highlighting the Case for a Decentralized Education in Uganda**

The previous discussions on decentralization provide implications for decentralized education systems that will enhance effective and efficient service delivery in education(UNESCO, 2008). It must be observed that despite the generalized categories of decentralization that are developed by scholars, other decentralization commentators apply these categories in an attempt to examine decentralized education systems. These will be indicated in the next three sections.

Decentralized education entails a delegation of decision control in relation to particular activities(Hurst,1985). In other words it should not be assumed that in the context of decentralized education that decision making is delegated for all processes. Rather decision making in this case targets a few activities. There are arguments that centralized governance vis-à-vis decentralized governance need not be misinterpreted as extreme opposites. Accordingly, what is important to understand is that centralized governance entails Central Government's control over decision making in relation to particular aspects considered vital for the national interest of the state(Hurst, 1985; Mc Lean & Lauglo, 1985; Davies, 1990). Therefore it is essential to highlight which issues in education are to be subjected to decentralization. These

issues in education relate to teacher recruitment and training, designing the curriculum, student enrollment as well as text book distribution, not forgetting School funding. Thus the central question that requires answers is, which aspects will remain a matter of Central Government on one hand and local Government on the other hand(McLean & Lauglo, 1985; Davies,1990; Bray,2005).

While assessing the diverse categories of decentralized education, theorists argue that these categories need not be assumed as merely management categories. Rather it is of significance to determine the ideologies that are inherent within these diverse categories(Mc Lean & Lauglo, 1985; McGinn & Street, 1986; Lauglo, 1995; McGinn & Welsch, 1999). This means that the different decentralized education systems reflect diverse stakeholder responsibility based on the specific ideology governing the system(McLean & Lauglo, 1985; McGinn & Welsch, 1999, Suzuki, 2002). Accordingly the ideologies that are discussed in the next three sections relate to professional experience, efficiency of market and political acceptability(McGinn & Welsch, 1999). Before discussing these ideologies, it is vital to highlight that these ideologies need not be assumed as completely separate ideals(Lauglo, 1995; Sayed, 2002).

#### **2.1.4 Decentralized Education driven by Professional Experience**

In relation to professional experience, Okitsu(2011, p.18) views this type of decentralization as one in which the Local Government and Local schools are best suited to manage the education sector for the locality in which they exist. It must be observed that there exists generalization among discourses that ' *a decentralized education produces community involvement*'(Okitsu, 2011, p.18). Nonetheless within this type of decentralization, community participation forms are hardly realized(Okitsu, 2011). This means that within this decentralization landscape, the door is open to only personnel with expertise. The ideology here is that *the more expertise one contains, the more authority one occupies*. This type of decentralization has been subjected to numerous debates resulting into criticisms of its monopolization tendency where in several personnel are sidelined from occupying responsibilities in decentralized education systems due to minimal professional experience(Gittell, 1967; Guthrie, 1986; King et al, 1998 as cited by Okitsu, 2011, p.18). As a result of this there has emerged wide spread sensitization for the need of decentralized education driven by either market forces or Government legitimacy(Okitsu, 2011).

### **2.1.5 Decentralized Education Driven by Market forces**

Within this domain, decentralization by market forces will provide parents or guardians the diverse choices of schools from which to satisfy their tastes and preferences. It is further argued that market driven education besides promoting school diversity, creates a distinction between profit oriented versus not for profit investments in the education sector(Chubb & Moe, 1988; World Bank, 2003; Salisbury & Tooley, 2005; Pratinos & LaRocque, 2007 as cited by Okitsu, 2011, p.19). This is in order to appreciate that despite the existence of various schools on the market, the rationale for setting up these schools may have been for profit maximization or non-profit. In other words it should not be merely assumed that the investors of these schools are acting for the general good of the society, but rather a degree of self satisfaction driven by profit making may be embedded in their actions.

Drawing on the earlier discussion on Neo-Liberalism, theorists argue that a market based education will promote innovativeness which in turn will see advances in the capacity of schools in as far as producing quality students(Okitsu, 2011). Equally relevant is that markets are associated with efficiency and effectiveness, therefore it can be argued that marketwise education will ensure that available resources are fully utilized in schools so as to produce the desired outcome(Okitsu, 2011). Furthermore, it is argued that within the marketwise-decentralized education, the accountability of teaching staff in a school to parents with pupils in that school will be enhanced. This will ensure that dysfunctional schools are laid off since the school market is quite competitive and only schools with functional systems will receive parent and community attention(World Bank, 2003; Patrinos & LaRocque, 2007 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.19). Hirshman(1970) defines this process as "exit"(Hirshman, 1970 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.19). Accordingly the customers in this case 'parents' who are displeased with the School standard in a particular School will transfer their children to better Schools which can be viewed on the School market(Hirshman, 1970).

Local participation under this market oriented-decentralized education occurs in situations where parents make choices about which Schools their children should attend, out of the many schools flooding the market(Okitsu, 2011). It has often been emphasized that market systems suit privatization practices(Okitsu, 2011). However this view is contested by a counter argument that market-oriented systems may also operate in Public School systems(Government owned

Schools) and not private systems only(Cohen, 1997; McGinn & Welsch, 1999; Patrinos & LaRocque, 2007 as cited by Okitsu, 2011, p.20). Thus it is emphasized that within the Government owned schools, market choices may be undertaken in situations where parents are provided documents containing Government spending per child in a Public School(Patrinos & LaRocque, 2007 as cited by Okitsu, 2011, p.20). This will enable parents make choices as to which institutions they will consult in regard to support for other learning aids that are not covered under Government expenditure(Patrinos & LaRocque, 2007 as cited by Okitsu, 2011, p.20).

From this discussion it can be concluded that within the context of market-based education, the parental or household participation is the mechanism through which education is accessed to students. In other words Government participation in this education system is not considered effective in developing the education sector(Whitty et al, 1998 as cited by Okitsu, 2011, p.19). Despite this argument, there has emerged criticisms to that notion of 'no Government involvement' in decentralized market based education. It is argued that the capacity and authority of Government cannot be completely eroded. Accordingly, some theorists have stated that Government support may be maintained and better still be increased within this market system. This can be achieved or realized by adopting performance yardsticks on which Government support can be measured by foreign inspectors and therefore incase the support is measured as effective in as far as promoting education services on the market, then how can Government involvement be seen as irrelevant? In case Government support is measured as non-effective by the foreign inspectors, then the initial proposal for a 'no Government involvement' may stand.

McGinn and Welsch(1999) as cited by Okitsu(2011,p.20) argue that these market based ideas remain untested. In short, the market approach in decentralized education operates on the idea that parents or households will undertake decisions on which Schools their children will attend out of the many options available. The Schools in turn have a goal of promoting or ensuring first class education services that are demanded on the education market so as to maintain their(Schools') survival. From this assumption, it appears that parental involvement in School selection is simply influenced by the existence of several Schools in the market that provide various alternatives for parents to assess which Schools are best suited for their children. This is nonetheless contrary to the literature that emphasizes the influence of *socio-economic status*,

*area location and information access* on parental decisions concerning their children's education. These factors are treated as more influential than the market driven idea of diverse choices and alternatives(Johnson, 1990; Whitty et al, 1998; McGinn & Welsch, 1999; Harma, 2009 as cited by Okitsu, 2011, p.20). Equally questionable is the market oriented aspect of *dysfunctional schools that eventually seize operation*(Bartlett & Le Grand, 1993 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.20). In developing countries, Schools run by Government tend to lack adequate facilities to cater for the high student numbers. However by no means have these Schools seized their operations as the market approach demands. Lacking adequate facilities may not create bankruptcy, a prerequisite for dysfunctional Schools(Barlett & LeGrand, 1993 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.20).

### **2.1.6 Decentralized Education Driven by Government Legitimacy**

The period of 1990's witnessed proposals among proponents of decentralized education systems for a politics-government ideology(Dyers & Rose, 2005 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.21) that defines local participation as not necessarily a means but an end. Government legitimacy is characterized by transparency, accountability and freedom to the citizens. Proponents of this politics-government perspective emphasize the relevance of political freedom in Education institutions(Dyer & Rose, 2005 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.21). Accordingly, they argue that all personnel working within institutions of education should exercise their political freedom by per-taking in decision making processes concerning their workplace(Lauglo, 1995 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.21).

It has been argued that legitimacy can be realized through two processes; participatory and representative democracy(Sayed, 2002 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.21). Representativeness concerns the degree to which individuals are able to express their choices through voting(Sayed, 2002 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.21). Furthermore, representative democracy calls upon all elected personnel to engage in joint planning and partnerships with local or higher authorities in policy making and implementation(Sayed, 2002 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.21). Participatory democracy on the other hand is more generic than representative , and involves the capability of individuals to engage in decision making over their entire livelihoods(ibid, 2002 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.21). Decision making under participatory democracy applies to several aspects including the election freedom, that is the symbol of representative democracy.

Unlike the decentralized education driven by professional experience, this form of decentralization is open to all individuals or groups and therefore people are not sidelined based on their qualifications and work expertise(Okitsu,2011). In addition, the market oriented decentralized education does not entertain any Government maneuvers or interventions, but rather propels parents to make choices for their children's education from the many alternative Schools in the market(Okitsu,2011). In short, parents are dependent on the market. However, the decentralized education driven by Government legitimacy offers all individuals the right to be empowered by Government so as to solely participate or make decisions singlehandedly concerning the education of their children(Hirschman, 1970 as cited by Okitsu,2011,p.22). Government intervention is viewed as a necessity by empowering parents and other members of the community to be able to decide for themselves the path of education that best suits their children. This therefore means that parents are not dictated to regarding the choice of education for their children, but rather are able to express their standpoint(Hirschman, 1970 as cited by Okitsu,2011,p.22) in case they are dissatisfied with School standards.

Other theorists often argue that through Government legitimacy, there has emerged community participation in the education sector, something which the market oriented and professional ideologies do not offer(Okitsu,2011). The assumption in this ideology is that where legitimacy is present, inequalities in terms of individual rights and freedom will be minimized and thus enabling all individuals to collectively have a say on their family education without any outside influence(Okitsu,2011). In short, as a result of regular collective involvement by parents in School related matters, community participation has become the landmark for parental intervention or involvement in education(Okitsu,2011).

This form of decentralized education highlights the assumption that, Central Government dominance and expertise has been minimized by the regular community participation. This has been achieved by the locals exercising their rights in terms designing School curricula and regular supervision of the teaching staff(Farrell & Jones, 2000; Sayed,2002 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.23). Accordingly, its relevant to pose the question on *whether Government control in education has completely eroded?* With the birth of community participation on the scene, it may appear a YES answer to suggest that Government is lacking control over School development. Weiler(1990) as cited by Okitsu(2011,p.22)does not challenge the argument concerning

Government erosion but asserts that Central Government acquires more legitimacy by showcasing swift responses to the community needs or local authority queries. Therefore Central Government in the eyes of the locals maintains a legitimate image despite a shift in the locus of control.

Community involvement has acquired support from the neo-liberal ideology in the 1990s wherein markets were viewed as bound to fail over time(Okitsu,2011). Therefore when this occurs Government simply performs a peacemaker role between conflicting market mechanisms. However this mediator role does not restore the efficiency that were being realized under the market regimes. Neo-liberals thus argue that community involvement replaces the market as the provider of effective and efficient methods for designing School developmental programs. Communities acquire this status as a result of exercising accountability and stimulating outcomes over three institutions; Schools, local administration and regional administration(World Bank, 2003; Gershberg & Winkler, 2004 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.22).

Another contentious issue arises over the ability of the different decentralized education systems to co-exist with each other. One notable case concerns the Government legitimacy versus the Market oriented model. In practice, the two forms of decentralization can work alongside each other(Okitsu, 2011). Nonetheless there are rival proponents who highlight that the two systems cannot co-exist (Whitty et al, 1998; Farrell & Jones, 2000; Rose, 2002; Sayed 2002; Suzuki, 2004; Sayed & Soudien, 2005 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.23). This is attributed to the collective or communal responsibility deduced from Government legitimacy whereas the market oriented model specifies individual choice making in the market(Sayed, 2002; Suzuki, 2004; Sayed & Soudien, 2005 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.23). Furthermore, in the market oriented model, choices are made for the individual interest and as an exercise of individual rights. On the contrary, Government legitimacy offers support to the exercise of communal rights and communal interests(Sayed, 2002; Suzuki, 2004; Sayed & Soudien, 2005 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.23). This means that parents in the market-oriented decentralized education undertake programs in Schools that serve their self interests. Accordingly with such practice, reaching a consensus on what programs to implement in Schools is quite challenging. On the other hand, Government legitimacy offers the platform for collective consultation and consensus on what programs and activities to be undertaken that reflect the majorities' interest.

### **2.1.6.1 Accountability: A Pre-requisite for Decentralized Education**

The term accountability is in quite common usage among conferences, workshops and speeches on development and government related issues(Okitsu, 2011). The term accountability in its regular usage has developed optional connotations such as employee inspection or auditing to ascertain the degree to which responsibilities laid down are fulfilled by workers(Okitsu, 2011).

Stewart(1984) as cited by Okitsu(2011,p.23) differentiates two forms of accountability; accountability component and accountability evaluation. The accountability component concerns a detailed examination of what activities were done, in other words providing an account of steps undertaken to fulfill tasks(Stewart, 1984 as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.23). Accountability evaluation on the other hand is a continuation of the component accountability whereby the findings obtained from examining the account are in turn investigated upon(Stewart, 1984 as cited by Okitsu,2011,p.23). This investigation applies to the procedures and tasks undertaken to establish the products which have initially been identified as account components. Therefore through this investigation, the procedures or tasks may be approved or disapproved(Stewart, 1984). Kogan(1986) as cited by Okitsu(2011,p.23) views accountability as an interaction process involving two individual groups wherein one sets the actions or tasks to be fulfilled by the other group. This creates a hierarchy between the two groups. As a result of this hierarchy, the group setting tasks will maintain authority in inspecting the actions pursued by the other individuals. In other words, *to have higher authority over others enables one to hold accountable the acts(ends) and procedures(means) pursued by others.*

From these two conceptualizations by Stewart(1984) and Kogan(1986) as cited by Okitsu(2011,p.24) it can be summarized that accountability is a process where the control and use of power is required so as to hold individuals or groups accountable for their behavior. This control of power is the undertaking of one group as opposed to others(accountable). This means that the accountable are sidelined from accessing power technologies. On the contrary, power distribution is required for those individuals who are to be held accountable(Helm, 1995 as cited by Okitsu, 2011, p.24). In other words even though power is controlled by an elite group of individuals, a small degree of power needs to be provided to those performing tasks. Without any

power provision to pursue activities, then no individuals can be held accountable for their accomplishments(Helm, 1995 as cited by Okitsu,2011,p.24).

Across the education sector, there are diverse modes of accountability that have emerged. Farrell & Law(1999) as cited by Okitsu(2011,p.24) provide four distinct accountability modes in the education sector. Accordingly these are "profession, hierarchy, marketing and public"(Farrell & Law, 1999 as cited by Okitsu, 2011, p.25). Furthermore *ibid*(1999) as cited by Okitsu(2011) contend that parental involvement in education applies particularly to marketing and public accountability.

Profession accountability concentrates on the means of education as opposed to the outcomes of education(Okitsu, 2011). In other words, accountability in this model focuses on the programs undertaken at Schools to promote quality education, but does not focus on investigating or accounting for the end result of these programs(Okitsu,2011). Under this model of accountability, attention is placed on personnel who are professionals in the education sector as opposed to parents and community personnel(Farrell & Law, 1999 as cited by Okitsu,2011,p.25). In short, these professionals could be employees of a single institution such as the Education Ministry in a country. More importantly, accountability in this model is undertaken among professionals themselves whereby each professional accounts to other colleagues, rather than to an outer authority(*ibid*,1999 as cited by Okitsu,2011,p.25).

The Hierarchy accountability builds on the professional accountability and creates opposite lines of accounting(Farrell & Law, 1999). Whereas profession accountability places attention on the means process, hierarchical accountability places attention on both the means and ends, in other words on the process and outcome(Farrell & Law, 1999). Hierarchical accountability borrows a similar line as professional accountability of focusing on the education professionals as opposed to community personnel(Farrell & Law, 1999 as cited by Okitsu,2011,p.26). However when it comes to the aspect of who accounts to who?, the professionals in this hierarchical model are accountable to Government authorities, what others such as Okitsu(2011, p.26) term as "politicians." This is contrary to the professional accountability where the professionals are accountable to fellow professionals in the same institution.

With the market model of accountability the attention is focused on the end or outcome of programs implemented in Schools(Okitsu,2011). Thus a central question posed could be; have the programs led to improved student performance or not? It must be noted that focusing on outcomes is derived from the nature of Schools as products in a market place and parents are the customers who want their children to access the product(School education). Thus as a consumer would strive for the outcomes of buying a skin ointment, the same can be said for parents seeking quality education for their children(Okitsu,2011). The outcomes in this case will be student(children) performance in School assessments. Following this, one can be able to answer the question, *who is accountable to whom?* The School comprised of a head teacher and teaching staff are solely accountable to parents having children in that particular School. This mode of accountability draws inspiration from market oriented decentralized education.

Public accountability draws inspiration from the Government legitimacy ideology of decentralized education(Ranson,1986 as cited by Okitsu,2011,p.26). Accordingly, Government personnel as well as professionals are accountable to the parents or general community(citizenry)(Ranson,1986 as cited by Okitsu,2011,p.26). In this case, citizenry(parents) demand accounts from the Government concerning both the means(programs) and ends(results) of policies implemented in Schools. Thus where Government response is regular, then it will be highly perceived as legitimate in the eyes of its citizens, who in this study are the parents and general community.

### **2.1.7 Legal Framework of Decentralized Education in Uganda.**

The operative framework for decentralization in Uganda is evidenced by the “*Local Government Statute of 1993, the Constitution of 1995 and the Local Government Act of 1997*” (Francis&James, 2003, p.327). These legal statutes mandate the transfer of responsibility from Central government to Local Councils at Village, Parish, Sub County, County and District levels.

As part of an effort to establish a decentralized education, the Government of Uganda established the Education Sector Investment Plan (1997-2003). The aim of this plan was to enable investments in Primary Education(IOB Impact Evaluation, 2008). Accordingly one of the six priorities of this plan was increasing the “involvement of local authorities and community groups in the Primary Education sector” (IOB Impact evaluation, 2008, p.44). Important to note is that

this investment can target learning infrastructure like classroom construction, monitoring and supervision of teachers as well as proposing solutions to problems hindering performance of pupils while at school.

Following the establishment of the Education Sector Investment Plan(1997-2003), communities were formalized as key participants in Primary Education. This in turn necessitated the establishment of community responsibilities. Accordingly, the current Government of Uganda(GoU) legalized community responsibilities by enacting the Education Act(2008) that re-defined the duties of each key stakeholder in the Universal Primary Education(UPE) in Uganda. To begin with, the Education Act(2008) defines the School Management Committees(SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations(PTAs) as the key community stakeholders with an active role in Uganda's UPE. The responsibilities of each group are highlighted in the preceding discussion of community participation.

## **2.2 Community Participation**

This section portrays the literature knowledge built around the concepts; communities and participation. More importantly however will be the discussion of community participation forms in UPE as well as the responsibilities of communities towards UPE. In doing so, it shall provide answers to research questions (I) and (II); (I)What forms of community participation operate in UPE? and (II) What are the responsibilities of the SMC and PTA communities?

### **2.2.1 Meaning of Community**

Ancient Sociology defines a community as a collection of people living in a single location and engaging in regular social interaction(Essuman, 2009). Beyond this ancient sociological definition has emerged a modern one which views a community as a collection of people having similar or identical interests but not necessarily living in the same locality and rarely engaging in any interaction(Essuman, 2009). From this modern perspective, interests form the basis of labeling individuals as a community on condition that they reflect identical values and interests. Cohen et al(2001) as cited by Essuman,2009,p.20) labels a community as a collection of individuals held together by similar cultures, kinship or folk ways. All these different viewpoints on the concept 'community' simply serve to appreciate the diverse use of the concept across

different contexts. Therefore as it is often stated, a single community definition is lacking (Bray 2003; Rose, 2003; Carney et al, 2007 as cited by Essuman, 2009, p.20).

The argument that a community is a uniform, horizontal (non-hierarchical) and non-conflicting group of individuals has been refuted by various Scholars (Hurst, 1985; Martin, 1996; Evans, 1996; Robinson & White, 2001; Rose, 2002; *ibid*, 2003; Bray, 2003; Pryor, 2005; Sayed & Soudien, 2005; Carney et al, 2007 as cited by Essuman, 2009, p.20). This is evidenced by Evans (1996) argument that there exist several contestations as well as bitter hostilities among remote (rural) communities. Bray (2003) further contends that communities may be categorized in three ways; Firstly based on geography or area context, the communities may be labeled as villages. Secondly based on kinship or cultural ties, the communities may be labeled by their tribal (cultural) names. Thirdly, based on shared household concerns, the communities may comprise of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) wherein parents of each household share the same concern of ensuring a valuable learning experience for their School children. Despite Bray's (2003) categorization, Lee & Newby (1983) emphasize that individuals living in the same geographical unit need not be labeled as a community because the geography does not by any standards reflect the similarity in the ways of life among individuals. In other words, geography simply reflects the location in which the individuals reside but does not investigate what activities if any are communalized. Accordingly therefore, Lee & Newby (1983) recommend that the social networks among individuals whether or not living in the same locality is what counts to reflect a community.

Following these differing analyses on the concept 'community', Redding (2001) as cited by Essuman, 2009, p.21) defines a School community as; (i) consisting of households or families of School children and (ii) interacting with each other based on common norms and values, ethics, reciprocal trust and formalities. From this description, two forms of School communities can be deduced. One consisting of staff members (administrative and teaching) of an institution or organization who have defined norms, values and formalities to undertake while exercising trust amongst themselves (Essuman, 2009). The second one comprises an open association made up of all parents, guardians, teaching staff of a particular School as well as other personnel such as security groups and local health centers near to the School premises (Essuman, 2009). Within this association, all members can publicly express their concerns in meetings. In this second

category, members are not necessarily tied together based on work ethics or norms, rather the issue is all about contributing a positive or supportive learning experience to the School students. The membership is therefore open and non-restrictive unlike the community limited to only staff members(Redding, 2001 as cited by Essuman,2009,p.22).

Essuman(2009) notes that the two community categorizations by Redding(2001) reflect different methodologies. The first category comprised of administrative and teaching staff is geared towards inner School progress whereby administrators work hand in hand with teachers to ensure that the School is operating as expected, in terms of regular Classes and Staff meetings(Redding, 2001 as cited by Essuman, 2009, p.22). The second category is geared towards overall student progress both in and outside the School. Thus parents, health and security personnel become relevant in ensuring the safety and discipline of students outside the School premises(Redding, 2001as cited by Essuman, 2009,p.22).

Following Redding's(2001) discussion it would appear that School communities run smoothly since no community member monopolizes others and all members appear to share the same defined goals, that is to say; better learning experience for students. However as Bray(1997) in Okitsu(2011, p.13) reflects, the relations among School community members is not necessarily a smooth one. This is due to the existence of individualistic interests among School community members(ibid). Ibid further cites the Parent-Teacher Association(PTA) as one such community where a section of wealthy or renown parents occupy high status in this association as compared the other parents or teachers. Likewise among teachers, ibid sights the existence of senior teachers of a particular School who exercise higher status in comparison to their colleagues. Accordingly therefore the parents and teachers having higher status or recognition occupy seats on the PTA executive(ibid). The PTA executive is a committee considered as the decision maker for the entire Parent Teacher Association(ibid). This in turn raises questions as to whether the decisions undertaken by the PTA executive are representative of all parents and teachers? More importantly, a question on accountability has to be posed in terms of whether the PTA executive is accountable to the non-executive members. Bray(1997) as cited by Okitsu(2011, p.14) therefore recommends that any study on School communities must put into consideration these two questions of representativeness and accountability.

Following this relevant discussion of the concept 'community', I define the School communities in my study based on the two categories formulated by Redding(2001). Therefore the limited or restrictive group in my research is the School Management Committee(SMC) while the all inclusive group is the Parent-Teacher Association(PTA). The School Management committee(SMC) consists of local authorities who are charged with the management and implementation of UPE Schools(Munene, 2009). The Parent-Teacher Association(PTA) as already defined comprises of all parents with children attending a particular School and all teachers employed at that School. The defined roles or responsibilities of each community are presented in section after a discussion on the concept 'participation'. This is because the responsibilities or roles undertaken by each group represent the framework of participation by both communities(SMC and PTA), hence the need to have an initial understanding of what participation means?

### **2.2.2 Meaning of 'Participation'.**

Participation is one of the most common catch phrases in development initiatives(Fitriah, 2010). In theory and practice, participation has acquired clout as a centre of attraction among NGOs' development projects, developmental organizations as well as developing states(Michener, 1998; Fitriah, 2010). As Michener(1998) asserts "practically all respectable development projects include the participation of people in their approach"(White et al, 1994; Michener, 1998, p.2105 as cited by Fitriah, 2010, p.9). Equally as well in the academic disciplines, the concept 'participation' has been utilized by Scholars as a relevant approach in explaining development prospects and challenges(Fitriah, 2010).

Scholars employing the concept 'participation' do recognize that it has such diverse meanings which has created a challenge in developing a single and applicable meaning of the term(Fitriah, 2010). To begin with, participation as a concept owes its origin to the works of Paulo Freire , a Brazilian scholar who in the 1970s formulated the concept through his publication entitled "Pedagogy of the Oppressed"(1970). In this publication, Freire(1970) as cited by Fitriah(2010,p.10) asserts that:

"every human being, no matter how ignorant or submerged in the culture of silence

he or she may be, is capable of looking critically at the world in a dialogical encounter

with others. Provided with the proper tools for such an encounter, the individual can gradually perceive personal and social reality as well as the contradiction in it, become conscious of his or her own perspective of that reality, and deal critically with it(ibid).

Following this, Freire(1970) argues that because of the exploitation by the exploiter, the exploited will rise up against those who have reduced them to inferiors. Thus as Fitriah(2010) notes, liberation and empowerment come into effect at this point. This is similarly expressed by Friere(1970) in his prescription that "this is the great humanistic historical task of the oppressed, to liberate themselves"(Friere, 1970, *op.cit.*). As a result of this, Friere's (1970) work is credited as providing the background for "participation and empowerment" concepts(Fitriah, 2010, p.11). This in turn has provided a reflection on the relationship between participation and empowerment.

Despite this relevant foundation on the concept 'participation', Rahman(1995) a scholar on participation, challenged Friere's(1970) understanding of participation. Accordingly, Rahman(1995) as cited by Fitriah(2010) views Friere's liberalistic method of participation as Marxist oriented which sought individual emancipation as opposed to collective emancipation. Accordingly, Rahman(1995) recommended the adoption of "popular participation"(Rahman, 1995, p.25; Fitriah,2010,p.11) as the genuine method through which community participation can be undertaken. This in turn enabled the 'popular participation' model to gain prominence as a challenger or rival to those who viewed participation as merely a component of liberalism(Fitriah, 2010). There exists a difference between the two founding ideas on participation . Friere's (1970) argument was that through participation, individuals' would be liberated and gain empowerment(Fitriah, *op.cit.*). On the other hand, Rahman(1995) as cited by Fitriah(2010,p.26) coined popular participation as a mechanism that focuses on the positive outcomes of participation for development prospects.

Rahman's(1995) participation perspective though inspiring did not mark an end to the manufacture of participation machinery. There emerged proponents of participation who were resigned to the concept of power (Fitriah, 2010). In other words genuine participation contained power as a major ingredient(ibid). One such proponent is the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development(UNRISD) which views participation as a collective means to maximize

control over resources by those excluded from accessing these resources(UNRISD, 1984 as cited by Fitriah, 2010, p.11). This view by the UNRISD is expressed by other participatory theorists(e.g. Fals-Borda, 1988 and Chambers, 1992 as cited by Fitriah,2010,p.11) who argue that the motive for participation is to access power, a unique kind termed as "people power"(Fals-Borda, 1988 cited in Rahnama, 1992, p.120 as cited by Fitriah,2010,p.11) that is owned by exploited individuals and their institutions. This re-emphasizes the relevance of power in enabling effective participation. This is clearly evidenced by Nelson and Wright(1995) who assert that the transfer of power is a sure outcome of participation(ibid as cited by Fitriah,2010,p.11).

Furthermore other Scholars of the popular participation tradition such as Shaeffer(1994) incorporate the concept involvement in explaining the features of participation. Accordingly participation entails involvement in the use of a service, investment towards a sector, presence in the form of attendance and providing awareness or expertise in the form of “consultation” (Shaeffer 1994 as cited by Uemura 1999, p.2).I particularly find Shaeffer’s investment and attendance models of involvement as essential to the performance of Pupils in Primary School. This is because investment can target the learning infrastructure like classroom construction, in addition to adequate scholastic material that offers a conducive learning environment which in the long run enhances performance. Attendance by parents is crucial as well as collective effort is maximized with the School administration to address issues that hinder the performance of Pupils in a School.

Various commentators on education and community development assert that *the most reliable participation is one in which the authority over decisions is shared among the locals*(Chambers, 1994; World Bank, 2003 as cited by Essuman, 2009, p.21). Midgley et al(1986) in Essuman, (2009,p.21) views community participation as the involvement by locals in affairs affecting their livelihoods. Frasier cited in Tikly & Barrett(2006, p.6) as cited by Essuman(2009,p.22)expresses that for participation to occur necessitates adjustments in society that eliminate inequalities among individuals. These inequalities limit the participation of certain disadvantaged groups of individuals who are of lower class as compared to those commanding higher status, *ibid*.

It is often stressed that individuals are motivated to pursue participation based on their perception of participation as either "intrinsic or instrumental"(Okitsu, 2011, p.27). Accordingly, certain

commentators argue that participation is relevant because it promotes effectiveness and efficient handling of tasks(e.g. Ostrom et al, 1993; Isham et al, 1995 as cited by Okitsu,2011,p.27). In short, participation is seen as a means to achieving targets. On the other hand, a section of commentators argue that participation operates as both a process and outcome-a mechanism through which individuals' capabilities are developed, a means through which individuals' gain self-confidence and providing an avenue by which locals exercise direct authority over decision making rather than being mere recipients of decisions made by unknown personnel(e.g. Chambers, 1983, 1995; Paul, 1987; Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001 as cited by Okitsu,2011,p.27 ). Despite such differing viewpoints, it is generally assumed that participation is cost effective for all individuals(Cooke & Kothari, 2001as cited by Okitsu, 2011,p.27).

From within the context of participation emerges the bigger picture of 'community participation.' Nonetheless the concept 'community participation' in comparison with 'popular participation' offers a more specific level of understanding community-led involvement. It is often highlighted that community participation just like popular participation is highly beneficial for community empowerment(Fitriah, 2010). On the other hand other participation theorists argue that empowerment of communities determines the level of participation undertaken. In other words, empowerment is highly beneficial for participation(Zimmerman, 1990).

The meaning of Community participation can be traced under United Nations(UN) Resolutions(Essuman, 2009). Accordingly one such resolution views community participation as "the creation of opportunities to enable all members of the community to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development(United Nations, 1981, p.5 as cited by Essuman, 2009, p.22). Essuman(2009) stresses that community participation as a discourse has been treated as both a means(process) or end(outcome). Nonetheless in this research, I define community participation as the responsibilities undertaken by the School Management Committee(SMC) and Parent-Teacher Association(PTA) to enable School management, student progress and overall development of the School.

Despite the positive attributes reflected about participation, there exist instances where community participation rather than being beneficial for a majority people instead favors a few individuals. Accordingly, Boates and Van Rensburg(2000) assert that in certain cases,

community participation is used as a position through which individual(s) may orientate others based on their own individual ideologies which cannot be assumed as applicable to all community members. In other words, community participation is a market place where individuals sell their ideas rather than enlighten the masses. In addition, Rahman(1993) urges that community involvement may not necessarily improve the capacity of locals or remotely located populations. Boates and Van Rensburg(2000) draw upon the most challenging issue in community participation. This involves *ensuring that the disadvantaged or exploited groups of people who are lacking the knowledge and capacity about participation are made inclusive in community involvement programs*. In other words, low-class individuals need not be sidelined from per taking in community participation simply because they are illiterate of such practices.

### **2.2.3 Community Participation in Education**

Community participation has a rich history universally. The first instances of community participation were traced as far back as pre-twentieth century. In other words, it was operational prior to the twentieth century(Fitriah,2010). At that time, Churches and Voluntary organizations were the institutions that acted as communities(Bray, 2003 as cited by Fitriah, 2010,p.22).

With the outbreak and aftermath of second world war(1939-1945), Government control over education sector was realized and became the order of the day. Thus the control shifted from Church and Voluntary institutions to Central Government control worldwide(Fitriah, 2010,p.22-23). This sudden control by Government over the education sector was facilitated by certain international agreements. Three international resolutions are often cited as making this realization possible(Government control). These are " the United Declaration of Human Rights-1948, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child-1959, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights-1966"(Fitriah, 2010, p.23).

Despite this period of Government control over education, the last fifteen years of the twentieth century witnessed a mobilization for communities to control the education platform globally. This was made possible based on Governments' declining trends in financial capacity and resource depletion(Bray, 2003, p.32 as cited by Fitriah, 2010, p.23). There were a section of states that attempted to formalize communally-owned Schools that would be financed and run by the communities(Hall, 1986, p.76 as cited by Fitriah, 2010, p.23). Accordingly just as

Government control in education was voiced for by international resolutions, community control was inspired by certain agreements. One such agreement was the "Delhi Declaration"(UNESCO, 1994 as cited by Fitriah, 2010, p.23) that was a product of the Education For All(EFA) goals. Accordingly, this 'Delhi Declaration' re-emphasized the necessity for community led involvement alongside Government roles in Schools. Bray(2003, p.32) in Fitriah, (2010, p.23) cites this Delhi Declaration:

"Education is and must be a societal responsibility encompassing governments, families, communities and non-governmental organization alike, it requires the commitment and participation of all, in a grand alliance that transcends diverse opinions and political positions."(UNESCO, 1994; Bray, 2003, p.32 cited by Fitriah,2010,p,23)

Following this emphasis on community involvement , Scholars have placed their attention on defining what community participation or involvement is? One definition views community participation as regular information exchange among individuals, and which results into empowerment(Mfum-Mensah, 2004; Fitriah, 2010).

Three categories of community participation in education are developed by Farrell(1998)in Mfum-Mensah(2004, pp.144-145) cited in Fitriah(2010, p.23). **Category one** comprises of a community at the "grassroots level" which exercises full ownership of a School(Fitriah, 2010, p.23). The community in this case operates as a School board or committee and functions in close co-operation with student-leaders commonly known as prefects(Fitriah, 2010). Prefects comprise of elected leaders among students who work to ensure discipline by assisting teaching staff in identifying notorious behaviors among students whether in class or dormitory. **Category two** entails a community running a School alongside regular Government or NGO participation(Fitriah, 2010). The community makes invitations to both Government and NGOs to per take in developing its School. With this intervention, it can be argued that designing and implementing School development programs does not take place at the School or community premises, but is rather controlled by the invitees; Government and NGOs(Fitriah, 2010). . This is different from category one where Government or NGO support is nonexistent. **Category three**

involves School communities that are perceived to be best suited in identifying the essential-developmental needs of a School. As a result of this identification, the communities then seek for support from donor organizations or agencies(Fitriah, 2010). From these three categories of community participation in education, I find the second category as applicable to community participation in Uganda's Universal Primary Education(UPE) and this will be indicated in the next preceding section on community participation forms, specifically School Management Committees.

#### **2.2.4 Forms of Community participation in Uganda's UPE: In Practice**

Despite the focus of development theory in the 1970s and 1980s on economic related issues, the trend in the 1990s reflected an increase in the focus on "human and social development"(Chambers, 1997; Higgins & Rwanyange, 2005; Compare, 2010, p.7). This is the context within which the Millennium Development Goals(MDGs) were that resulted into an agenda for human-social development (Higgins & Rwanyange, 2005; Compare, 2010). Education for all, termed in other wards as Universal Primary Education acquired its status as one of the human-social development goals under the MDGs. The other goals include the "eradication of poverty and hunger, improvement in gender empowerment, reduction in the rate of child mortality, promotion of maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases, promotion of environmental sustainability and creating a global partnership for development" (UNDP, 2013; The Millennium Development Goals: [www.undp.org/MDGs](http://www.undp.org/MDGs)).

With the implementation of Universal Primary Education in Uganda, the attention was placed on the "local School Management" (MoES, 2000 as cited by Suzuki, 2002, p.245). One such group of locals are the Local Councils charged with the role of supervising the usage of the UPE funds(Suzuki, 2002) within every District. Another relevant group that forms part of the focus of my research is the School Management Committees(SMC) with the duty of ensuring the day to day School operation (Suzuki, 2002). To validate the essentiality of SMCs requires a review of the Government of Uganda's stand on UPE. Accordingly "the successful implementation of UPE ...greatly depends on the School Management Committees" (MoES, 1998, p.17 as cited by Suzuki, 2002, p.245).

Equally important as well are the Parent-Teacher Associations which form the other focus of my study. Important to note is that prior to UPE implementation in Uganda, the financing of Primary schools was a duty of the PTA (Suzuki, 2002) under which parents contributed a substantial fee that provided a supplement to the earnings of teachers (Suzuki, 2002). This provided the PTA with a dominant authority in Schools, despite an absence of legal status (Suzuki, 2002). On the contrary with UPE arrival in 1997, the School management committee has become the dominant authority in school management (Suzuki, 2002).

The Education Act, 2008, Section 58, Part II on Management Committees, reveals that the SMC shall consist of six members including a chairperson. These are:

- (I) "One Local Government Representative nominated by District Councils responsible for Education.
- (II) One Local Council Representative of the Executive Committee.
- (III) One Individual elected by the Sub-County.
- (IV) One representative of parents at the school, elected at the annual general meeting.
- (V) One School staff representative usually the Head Teacher who serves as a secretary.
- (VI) One representative of the former school students, elected at a meeting of former students if any" ( Source: Education Act , 2008, p.47-48).

The Parent-Teacher Association(PTA) is open to parents/guardians whose children attend a particular school as well as the teachers who tutor these pupils (Munene, 2009). The PTA has an executive committee consisting of five members representing both teachers and parents. This committee is elected by the parents(Suzuki, 2002).

It must be appreciated that just as the School Management Committees(SMC) have got a Chairperson, the PTAs have got a Chairperson that heads the executive committee. This position is subject to parents' election. In most cases, the Chairperson of the PTA is a parent while the teachers hardly succeed in attaining this position. Therefore the elected Chairperson is presumed to be the parents' representative in the School Management Committee meetings(Suzuki, 2002).

Having highlighted the composition of the two communities; SMC and PTA, it is vital to trace the historical background of each community group in Uganda so as to appreciate the changes that have engulfed the two communities. Despite these shifts and changes in responsibilities in the past, the School Management committees and Parent-Teacher Associations have nonetheless maintained their status as the leading communities in School development. The development of the PTA is discussed first, after which is the SMC development.

### **2.2.5 The Development of Parent Teacher Associations(PTA) in Uganda**

In 1980, the Government's support to the education service was lowered thus initiating unprecedented involvement by parents through the PTAs (Dauda, 2004 in JPER, 2004, p.34). In Uganda, PTAs have been vibrant through budget support that is relevant for welfare of teaching staff. This welfare supports lunch meals and overtime duty supplement. In addition, this budget meets the utility costs such as electricity and water services for the School. Equally as well the PTA support has targeted construction of classrooms and teacher quarters(homes) (Dauda, 2004 in JPER, 2004, p.35). However as often emphasized, the relevance or dominant role of PTAs in supporting the above mentioned aspects has proved a major challenge for equity among Primary Schools (Dauda, 2004 in JPER, 2004, p.35). The result of this "inequality"(Dauda, 2004; JPER, 2004, p.35) among UPE Schools wherein some schools unlike others have received higher support from their respective PTAs. In the long-run this type of school/PTA inequality perpetuates itself in the domain of academic performance among Schools.

With this acquired role by the PTA of resource support to Schools, the PTAs strengthened their status in Schools in terms of being the major actor of School development. However it is significant to note that there emerged friction between the PTA versus SMC institutions. This is because the PTA by virtue of their support to School development, demanded more authority over Policy making in Schools. This nonetheless was the responsibility of SMCs. It is significant to note as well that the SMC does not offer any resource support to the School (Dauda, 2004 in JPER, 2004, p.36).

In terms of School meetings, the SMC may meet on two selected dates annually. This however is different from the PTA executive composed of selected parents and the School head that may seat more than once per School term(semester) depending on the status of the School needs.

As already stated, there has been a growing friction between SMC and PTA groups. This friction according to local authorities in a District particularly Councilors has resulted into marginalization of School committee roles by the vibrant PTA (Dauda, 2004 in JPER, 2004, p.35). District Councilors have specified the composition of this marginalization as consisting of finance and budgeting for School development (Dauda, 2004, JPER, 2004). However the marginalization fairy tale does not stop at PTA versus SMC. There has emerged friction and further marginalization between the PTA and the Councilors in relation to School "policy and planning" (Dauda, 2004; JPER, 2004, p.35). This conflict between the PTA versus Councilors is reflected by the PTAs accusation that the area Councilors' agenda for decision making is not realistic in relation to the finances available at the School (Dauda, 2004 in JPER, 2004, p.35). The result of these unrealistic decisions according to the PTA executive has resulted into constant visits by the Councilors to the PTA executive in demand for finances to turn policy into action programs which the PTA do not exercise authority over (Dauda, 2004 in JPER, 2004, p.35).

### **2.2.6 School Management Committee development in Uganda**

Specifically within the education department, decentralization has resulted into the creation of School committees for School management purpose (CAI & Smith, 2000; Prinsen & Titeca, 2008 in PAD, 2008, p.151). In 1998 SMCs acquired the status of Government representative making them retain authority in School planning and management of resources (Prinsen & Titeca, 2008 in PAD, 2008, p.151). Nonetheless the historical establishment of SMCs had twists and turns.

Formally, SMCs were created in December 1969 (GoU Ministry of Education, 1969; Prinsen & Titeca, 2008 in PAD, 2008, p.152). However the political turmoil that engulfed the Government evidenced by the 1971 coup by Idi Amin that overthrew the then current President, Apollo Milton Obote, resulted into SMC operations becoming futile or dormant in Schools (Prinsen & Titeca; PAD, 2008). Thus throughout the 70s and first half of the 80s characterized by political

unrest, SMC role diminished resulting into the PTA gaining the responsibility of planning and management of Primary Schools (Reinikka & Svensson, 2004; Prinsen & Titeca, 2008 in PAD, 2008, p.152). This responsibility was acquired by parents through the PTA and was a result of the high contributions of funds to Primary Schools which in turn enabled them to design School development programs (Prinsen & Titeca, 2008 in PAD, 2008, p.152). This status was not only recognized by the PTA itself but by the District Education Officers (DEO).

The PTA control of School management lasted till 1998 when UPE was established by the regime of current President, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. From UPE's entry point in Uganda, the SMCs were reinstated by the Government (Prinsen & Titeca, 2008 in PAD, 2008, p.152). From 1998 onwards the SMC reinstatement was accompanied by a yearly provision of "Capitation grants" (Prinsen & Titeca, 2008; PAD, 2008, p.153), which act as funds from Government to support School development through facility acquisition and support for Scholastic materials (Prinsen & Titeca, 2008; PAD, 2008). The statistic composition of this capitation grant reflected "4.4 US Dollars per child in UPE Schools" (Prinsen & Titeca, 2008; PAD, 2008, p.153). This provided the prospect for each UPE School to have funds for payment of utility bills (electricity and water), supply of sufficient Scholastic materials in particular text books and chalk (Prinsen & Titeca, 2008; PAD, 2008). This fund was provided to the SMCs from Government that made them dominate the planning, finance and budgeting roles at each respective School.

With this acquired status since 1998, Prinsen & Titeca (2008) raise three relevant questions. How is the distribution of power among the SMCs?, To whom do the SMCs report to? and Have the SMCs owned the Committees? These questions are addressed in section.....

Having traced the historical development of the two communities in Uganda's Primary education, it is equally relevant to discuss the specific community responsibilities respectively. This is in order to appreciate the contribution by Scholars particularly Williams(1997) who is so often cited in discussions surrounding PTA and SMC responsibilities. In doing so, it provides a foundation for answering the 4th research question about community responsibilities.

### **2.2.7 The Generalized Responsibilities of Communities in Education: Relevance of School Management Committees & Parent Teacher Associations.**

The essentiality of community involvement in Primary education can be traced under Williams's(1997) three purposes of communities in education cited by Fushieni(2005,p.48).

Support for class room instruction is the first purpose that Williams (1997) develops. This concerns bettering the scholastic material to enable a conducive, regular and effective learning to take place. A review of the Ugandan Education Act(2008) reveals that this is a matter of responsibility shared by School Management committees, parents and teachers(PTA). School committees' role is essential in enabling a number of school development activities. These include but are not limited to "provision of guidance in school operation, creation of school development plan and monitoring of school resources for maximum pupil learning"(UPE Hand book, 2004, p.15). Teachers' responsibilities towards support for instruction is witnessed in their duties towards (I) development of curricular and co-curricular events and (II) attendance in school staff meetings. Similarly parental support to class instruction acquires the form of (I) provision of scholastic material to children as well as feeding and(II) regular follow up of children's attendance and class scores.(UPE Hand book,2004,p.17).

Secondly, community participation is as well viewed as essential in management of schools through which communities provide an advisory platform and consultation roles on school development (Williams, 1997; Watt, 2001 as cited by Fushieni, 2005, p.35). It is of great importance to appreciate that the school management arena is not limited and as such can entail responsibilities in allocation and monitoring of school resources that aid in curbing vices that hinder quality education(UPE Handbook,2004). In Uganda, the SMC monopolizes this role, and their management roles incorporate an element of financial management. This can be viewed by the management responsibilities that it occupies. These are(I) creation and display of school costs, (II) prevention of psychological harm from School staff or parents towards pupils and (III) persistent creation of financial reports for each school and regular reporting of these reports to parents and local authorities(UPE Handbook,2004,p.15). In short, School management is an arena dominated by the School Management Committees(SMCs).

Resource Mobilization is the third relevance of communities towards school performance developed by Williams(1997) in Watt(2001, p.27) cited by Fushieni(2005,p.35). As Fushieni(2005) reflects, participation in education through resource mobilization is a very common area of communities. Resource mobilization is essential as it creates a more accountable perception by community personnel towards their respective schools(Fushieni,2005).What is more important is that resources build a conducive learning environment for pupils to undertake quality basic training. An observation of school committee responsibilities reveals that they have a duty in mobilizing resources to address school developmental activities. Despite this however the actual contribution of funds or resources is a role performed by the parents. Accordingly parents shall (I) provide support for labor in constructing school facilities, (II) provide regular movement of pupils to and from school and (III) Mid-day feeding for pupils while at school(UPE Handbook,2004,p.17-18).

Following Williams'(1997) perspective, community responsibilities can be generally summarized as involving all concerned parties, whether management, teaching staff and parents.

## **2.2.8 The Specific Responsibilities of School Management Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations in Uganda**

Having highlighted the specific personnel who constitute SMCs and PTAs in Uganda's Primary education under section 2.2.7.4, I proceed to highlight the specific formal responsibilities of each respective community that are provided in the Ugandan Education Act(2008).

### **2.2.8.1.School Management Committee Responsibilities in Uganda**

According to Section 58, Part V, pp.51-52 of the Education Act, the School Management committees are charged with the following responsibilities:-

- (i) "The SMC shall manage the School for which it has been established in accordance with the Act and its regulations.
- (ii) The functions of the committee shall in so far as they relate to the day to day administration and conduct of the School be performed by the Head-Teacher on behalf of the management committee.

- (iii) A member of the committee shall not be subject to any personal liability of any contract entered into by or on behalf of the management, in so far as he or she acted in good faith.
- (iv) There shall be consultation with the foundation body e.g. Church before transfer or posting of a Head-Teacher and deputy Head-Teacher to a School.
- (v) A management committee shall have the right to appeal to the District Council against the posting or transfer of a teacher to or from a School within twenty-one days from the day it is notified of the posting or transfer.
- (vi) Where there is an appeal by the management committee under sub-regulation(v), the teacher affected shall be informed of the reasons giving rise to the appeal to enable him or her to respond.
- (vii) At the hearing of the appeal referred to in sub-regulation(vi), the teacher affected shall have the right to appear and defend him or herself at the hearing of the appeal.
- (viii) A management committee may after consultation with the District Education Officer(DEO) in Local Government and the Head-Teacher, declare vacancies of non-teaching staff for the School to the District Service Commission to recruit the required staff.
- (ix) A management committee shall make such arrangements as it deems necessary to enable the staff members of the School to submit their views, proposals or representation to the management committee."

(Source: The Ugandan Education Act, 2008, Section 58, Part V, pp.51-52)

Equally important though defined in a separate section is the aspect of School Management Committee financing or funding. Accordingly, the funds of the SMC shall consist of (i) "UPE grants, bursaries, fees and teachers' salaries, (ii) money acquired from the sale of products, (iii) gifts, donations or endowments from any sources and (iv) money paid for mid-day meals and any charges collected in respect of pupils"(Education Act, 2008, Section 58, Part ix, p.57).

### 2.2.8.2 Parent-Teacher Association(PTA) Responsibilities in Uganda

The PTA community consists of both parents/guardians with children in a School and the teaching staff of that particular School. Therefore in-order to highlight the responsibilities of the PTA necessitates a display of parent and teacher responsibilities respectively. In other words, the responsibilities of the PTA are the sum of parent and teacher roles which are defined in the Education Act(2008), Part III on the Provision of Education and Training, p.12.

The responsibilities of **parents/guardians** with children in a particular Government aided School include the following:

- (i) "Registering their children who are aged six years for School attendance.
- (ii) providing parental guidance and psycho-social welfare to their children.
- (iii) providing food, clothing, shelter, medical care and transport.
- (iv) promoting moral, spiritual and cultural growth of the children.
- (v) participating in the promotion of discipline of their children.
- (vi) participating in community support to the School.
- (vii) participating in the development and review of the curriculum"(PTA meetings).

(Source: Ugandan Education Act, 2008, Part III, p.12)

The responsibilities of **teachers** as defined under the Education Act, 2008 include the following:-

- (i) Attend to pupils regularly in form of classroom duties.
- (ii) Keeping alert and conscious of the School Timetable.
- (iii) contributing to the improvement of pupils' discipline.
- (iv) Participating alongside parents in developing and reviewing of Curriculum(PTA meetings ).
- (v) Attending to regular staff meetings at the School premises.
- (vi) Providing leadership in classroom instruction and co-curricular activities.

- (vii) Formulating regular assessments in all curriculum areas so as to test pupils' understanding.
- (viii) Determining pupil grades based on their output in School assessments.
- (ix) Displaying each pupil's performance to their respective parents at PTA meetings.  
(source: Education Act, 2008, Part III).

An examination of the parent and teacher responsibilities reveals that parental involvement is geared towards promoting the welfare of their children so as to have a conducive learning experience. On the other hand, teacher participation is crucial in providing knowledge to pupils so as to curb or minimize illiteracy that so often begins at early childhood.

Having identified the specific responsibilities of the Parent-Teacher Associations and School Management, it equally necessitated highlighting the responsibilities of Central Government towards the Primary education sector. For clarity purposes, the Central Government was not an aspect for this research as the attention was specifically on communities' impact on pupil performance. However the Central Government remains a valuable source of support to the UPE Schools, thus not mentioning its roles would leave a big gap in assessing the level of Government involvement in School development among UPE Schools.

### **2.3 Responsibilities of Central Government in Uganda's Universal Primary Education**

The notion 'Central Government' is in quite common usage when discussing issues relating to Universal Primary Education worldwide. This is because Government as a state institution is the sole source of funds to Schools under UPE even though other institutions such as NGOs and Voluntary Organizations may contribute a substantial amount of support to these Schools. More importantly as already indicated, the Central Government in Uganda has often performed a key role in determining community operations in UPE Schools.

In practice, Central Government comprises the Executive, Parliament and Judicial systems. The relevant question arising out of this would be; Which Government institution is exercises the sole responsibility over the Universal Primary Education program? The context of this research was Uganda, and accordingly, the Executive branch of Government maintains the state management of Primary education. However the Executive branch is quite abstract consisting of different state

authorities in particular Head of State(President) and Cabinet Ministers. The Head of State appoints these ministers to oversee different sectors whether health, education, foreign affairs, to mention but a few. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education and Sports(MoES) is the institution that presides over the entire programming of the education sector in Uganda. Therefore the *responsibilities of the Central Government* towards elementary learning can as well be rephrased as the *responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Sports*.

According to the Education Act, 2008, Part III, Section 5, pp.11-12 on Stakeholder responsibilities, Central Government is charged with the following responsibilities in relation to Primary education:-

- (i) supplying Schools with adequate quantities of scholastic materials so as to maximize Classroom instruction.
  - (ii) defining relevant policies that will support education training(teacher training).
  - (iii) initiating and maintaining the state goals of education.
  - (iv) designing and supervising the national curriculum.
  - (v) measuring academic standards through regular assessments and annual national exams.
  - (vi) performing regular registration and licensing of teachers.
  - (vii) teacher recruitment, advancement(promotion) and supervision.
  - (viii) defining the language of Classroom learning.
  - (ix) monitoring the level of pupil achievement in both State funded and Private Schools.
- (Source: Education Act, 2008, Part III, Section 5, pp. 11-12)

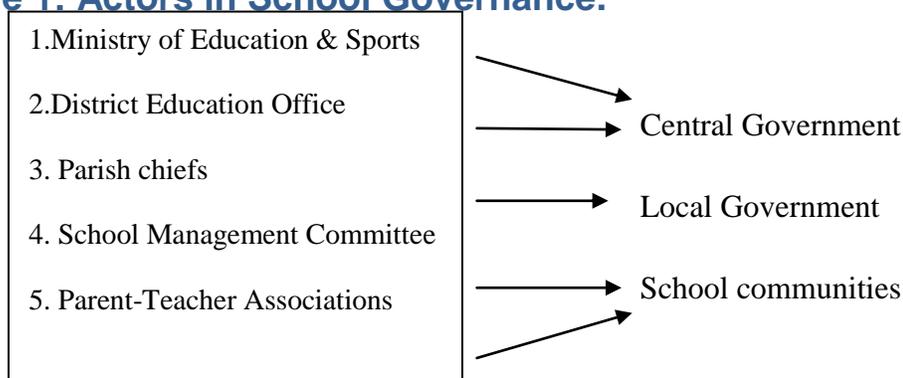
### **2.3.1 Governance Structure of UPE in Uganda: Authorities in School development.**

Having discussed the historical development, composition and formal responsibilities of the School Management Committees, Parent-Teacher Associations and Central Government in Uganda, the structure of Governance in Universal Primary Education can be summarized. In

other words, how does the concept 'Governance' operate in the Universal Primary Education system?

The structure of Governance in particular to Uganda's Universal Primary Education is summarized in the preceding table:

**Figure 1: Actors in School Governance.**



(source: Author's creation derived from literature in Munene, 2009)

It is important to note that the structure of Governance in Uganda's UPE is a hierarchical one. In short it is not a horizontal structure but rather a vertical one showcasing which authorities exercise authority over others. This is dependent on one's position in the structure wherein each authority exercises power over the preceding ones. Despite the operation of a decentralized UPE policy, the Central Government remains a dominant actor in management and financing of the program.

As the previous figure 1 indicates, the Central Government is represented by the Ministry of Education and Sports(MoES,2012) and resides at the highest position in the hierarchy. After which is the District Education Office which is an indicator of decentralized education and

is therefore an indicator of Local Government authority at the District level. This office is headed by the District Education Officer(DEO) and is in charge of decision making, policy implementation as well as monitoring teaching staff and pupil performance at each respective School within the District(MoES,2012). Equally important the DEO office performs a *peace-maker role* that involves mediating between conflicting parties for instance head-teacher versus teachers is a common cause for concern in UPE Schools wherein teachers express their dissatisfaction of a newly appointed head-teacher(MoES,2012). This type of dissatisfaction is mostly expressed in the form of strikes by teaching staff. This line of conflict though is at a School-level. More importantly there has often emerged teachers' dissatisfaction of non-payment of salary over a time span whether one, two or three months(MoES,2012). Similarly, the dissatisfaction here is expressed through sit-down strikes whereby teachers lay down their teaching responsibilities claiming to resume once their salaries have been made by Government. This type of conflict though operating at the School-level(premises) is targeted towards an outside authority, in this case Government. This is different from the head-teacher versus teacher exchanges that involve two internal(School based) actors in UPE. The Parish chiefs are elected individuals that exercise power over a particular locality or area radius(Education Act,2008). The notion 'locality' should not be misinterpreted as District. A Parish is simply a constituency with a defined radius and within a District. This means that all education centers, organizations and business firms found within that constituency are liable to the Parish chiefs. School Management Committee and Parent-Teacher Associations complete the Governance ladder respectively and represent community responsibilities at Primary Schools. Nonetheless it is relevant to identify to whom these communities report to or are accountable to? The Governance ladder provides the direction that should be undertaken when reporting on what has been done or not. In other words, each actor is accountable to the authority above it in the hierarchy. Accordingly therefore, the two community groups report back to the Parish chiefs who in turn are accountable to the District Education Office(Education Act,2008).

Despite the uniformity in defining the School committee and Parent-Teacher Associations as 'communities', as the previous figure 1 indicates, the School committee occupies a higher rank in the Governance ladder than the PTA by virtue of its management and decision making clout. Despite the positional differences in the ladder, it must be reconciled however that the PTA is not necessarily accountable to the management committee. This is because the two

institutions(SMC & PTA) are considered as School communities which on the historical development of the two, reveals the activeness and dominance of each group. Therefore it would be a foregone conclusion to claim that the status of the committee as a decision maker demands accountability from the non-decision makers, in this case the Parent-Teacher Associations. From this position has emerged a growing concern by the parents and teachers concerning the need for checks and balances during SMC-PTA relations. Parents and teachers in Ugandan UPE Schools often claim that their role in decision-making and program implementation is often undermined. Thus they assume the status of passive participants rather than active involvers in promoting School performance and development. One critical aspect of this passive participation involves a one-way flow of information. This involves the communication of parents and teacher views' in PTA meetings to the management committee. This is done by the Secretary of the PTA Executive who provides the minutes of their meeting to the Secretary of the SMC who in most cases is the School's head-teacher(Education Act,2008). On the contrary, information flow from the School Management committee to the parents and teachers is lacking. In other words, the PTA is not subjected to any minutes of SMC meetings. The implication of this is that the School management exercises ownership of information and in turn controls the decision making platform. The PTA are unable to control the decision making process because they are incapacitated in terms of information access. They have no idea about any discussions and deliberations from the School committee meetings. Knowledge of the agenda in management meetings would enable the PTA to *have a say* or express their views on what urgent needs within the School necessitate policy design and implementation. It must be appreciated though that monopolizing information access is not a rule rigidly adhered to by all School managers, rather there are cases where the management committee draws in PTA support and participation since as it is often stated, *the parents are the owners of the Schools*. The implication of this is that there emerges a holistic approach to *problem identification, policy design, resource mobilization and policy implementation* in a particular School. In other words, parents and teachers are not sidelined but are active participants in designing suitable programs to support quality learning for their children.

### **2.3.2 Structure of Leadership within School Premises: Staff and Students**

In order to have an adequate understanding of the dynamics of leadership in a School, I discuss the manner of leadership in both state-run and private owned Schools. Internally, Primary Schools in Uganda whether Government aided or private have got a uniform structure of leadership consisting of both staff and students(Munene,2009). Accordingly, a School is internally headed by the head-teacher(called headmaster if male or headmistress if female) who is assisted by a deputy head-teacher. In privately owned Schools, the position of deputy head-teacher is manipulated to create more than one deputy head; with one serving the managerial duties while the other focuses on academics and student discipline(Munene,2009). In UPE Schools, this is not the case, there is appointed to each School a head-teacher and one deputy.

The teaching staff are another authority in Government aided Schools who are third in the hierarchy of authority below the head and deputy head teachers(Munene,2009). However this is not the case with the private Schools where a School Bursar occupying the position of finance officer is considered as occupying the third hierarchical position below the head and deputy head teacher(Munene,2009). The Bursar occupies the position of collecting and examining the financial statements of the School so as to ascertain the School fees that has been paid in relation to each of the students. Besides that is the role of balancing the books of accounts including the expenditures undertaken in the School(Munene,2009). The UPE or Government run Schools do not have a Bursar and that can be simply understood from the absenteeism of School fees collection. In addition the issues concerning expenditure and balancing accounts is done by the head-teacher in most of the UPE Schools. This raises more concerns of transparency and accountability. At a student level are elected Prefects who are voted by the entire pupil population in the School. These assist the teaching staff in promoting and ensuring discipline, feeding, smartness, environment cleaning, time keeping and sports of all students in a School. The privately run Schools and the UPE Schools once again score differently in this regard. In the private Schools therefore, the policy of students electing one of their own to occupy an office of authority is vibrant and regular whereas their counterparts in the Government aided Schools, only a handful allow for this transparent election(Munene,2009). These are the UPE Schools located in urban and semi-urban localities. Besides these Schools, the majority of UPE Schools identified by remote localities are practitioners of irregular or inconsistent Prefectural elections.

In addition, this irregularity is transformed into a dictatorial choice wherein the head-teacher by virtue of his or her authority simply appoints a number of students to serve as Prefects(Munene,2009). This is contrary to the democratic practice of free and fair transparent elections that are synonymous with the private Schools and few Government aided Schools(UPE).

Having discussed the dynamics of community actors and non-community actors inherent within primary education system in Uganda, the attention shifts to the education context of this study which is Universal Primary Education. This discussion is particularly done on Uganda so as to unlock the structures of learning in UPE schools alongside the curriculum and grading structures. All these are provided in the next sections.

## **2.4 Universal Primary Education in Uganda**

Despite the focus of development theory in the 1970s and 1980s on economic related issues, the trend in the 1990s reflected an increase in the focus on "human and social development"(Chambers, 1997; Higgins & Rwanyange, 2005; Compare, 2010, p.7). This is the context within which the Millennium Development Goals(MDGs) were that resulted into an agenda for human-social development (Higgins & Rwanyange, 2005; Compare, 2010). Education for all, termed in other wards as Universal Primary Education acquired its status as one of the human-social development goals under the MDGs. The other goals include the "eradication of poverty and hunger, improvement in gender empowerment, reduction in the rate of child mortality, promotion of maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases, promotion of environmental sustainability and creating a global partnership for development" (UNDP, 2013; The Millennium Development Goals: [www.undp.org/MDGs](http://www.undp.org/MDGs)).

What is more important is that in Uganda, community participation in education operates under the umbrella of this Universal Primary education program. Therefore it is important to highlight that a discussion on community participation in education without an examination on UPE would leave a gap in locating and understanding the context of education within which the SMCs and PTAs operate. In other words, community participation is inactive in higher education systems in Uganda. Even within Secondary education, the PTA and School Management are not as vibrant as their counterparts in Primary education. Equally important is that in Uganda as already

indicated the PTAs and SMCs were first implemented in Primary schools. This explains the reason as to why a discussion on UPE is provided in the next section. Under UPE, a focus shall as well be on the curriculum and grading structure operative in Ugandan elementary schools. This will assist the reader in understanding how grades in assessments are determined and in making sense of the performance statistics revealed in chapter four. However the central issue under UPE will be examining the determinants of academic performance besides community participation in the UPE schools.

## 2.4.0 Uganda Before UPE

Uganda had been a British imperial between "1894 to 1962"(Ezenne, 2012, p.3), and attained independence on 9th October 1962the day. During the period of British imperialism and right after independence, Uganda continued to function under the model of British education (Ezenne, 2012). Accordingly therefore the School education system was structured to cover three years of Kindergarten, seven years of Primary School, four years of Ordinary level(O Level)secondary education and two years of Advanced level(A Level) secondary education.

### 2.4.1 Levels of Learning in Primary School Education.

As already noted, there are seven years of education under Ugandan Primary education. In each of these seven years, pupils are expected to be enrolling as beginners while others advance to preceding upper class levels. There are seven classes(grades) under Primary Schools consisting of different groups of pupils based on age. This can be summarized in the table 1 below:

**Table 1. Levels of Learning in Ugandan Primary School**

Class Level	Year of Education	Age composition of Pupils
Primary Seven (Grade 7)	Seventh Year(highest level)	12-13year olds
Primary Six (Grade 6)	Sixth Year	11-12year olds
Primary Five (Grade 5)	Fifth Year	10-11year olds
Primary Four (Grade 4)	Fourth Year	9-10year olds

Primary Three(Grade 3)	Third Year	8-9year olds
Primary Two (Grade 2)	Second Year	7-8year olds
Primary One (Grade 1)	First Year(lowest level)	6-7year olds

(Source: Author's Creation)

**NOTE:** In countries such as United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia, the different levels of learning under Elementary School are denoted with the label 'Grade'. In other words, Grade One, Grade Two, Grade Three, Grade Four, Grade Five, Grade Six and Grade Seven. On the contrary, the different levels of learning under Ugandan Primary Schools are denoted with the label 'Primary'. Accordingly these are Primary One(P.1), Primary Two(P.2), Primary Three(P.3), Primary Four(P.4), Primary Five(P.5), Primary Six(P.6) and Primary Seven(P.7). Each of these levels have pupils with their respective age groups and corresponding years of study, as the table 1 provides. On these grounds, I intend to use the labels suited to my country of nationality, Uganda. In other words throughout this Thesis, I shall often refer to the different levels of studying in Primary Schools as P.1, P.2, P.3, P.4, P.5, P.6 and P.7. **NOTE:** P in short stands for 'Primary.'.

Primary Seven(P.7) is the highest level of learning under Primary education in Uganda. All pupils belonging to this level sit for national examinations known as Primary Leaving Examinations(PLE). On the contrary, the class levels below Primary Seven all sit for regular School based examinations set by their respective teachers(MoES,2011). These School based examinations are therefore unique across all Schools. This is because the examination questions set by teachers from a particular School cannot be identical to those set by other teachers in another School. Accordingly there is no uniformity in School based assessments done by pupils from different Schools. However uniformity is realized under Primary Leaving examinations. This is because all Primary Schools countrywide register their Primary Seven pupils(P.7) to the examinations body known as the Uganda National Examinations Board(UNEB). Following this, the examinations board prepares assessments for the exact number of Primary Seven pupils registered in each Primary School. These assessments are made identical for all students and relate to four subject areas; Mathematics, English, Science and Social Studies. This means that a pupil in a top urban School like Hillside Primary School will sit for the same exam questions as a

pupil in a remotely located UPE School such as Nakakandwa R/C Primary School. This is done to identify Schools that are extremely poor in terms of performance and speculate measures to implement in these Schools so as to promote their academic standard.

From the previous table 1, it can be concluded that the standard age of enrolling in Primary School is six years. The Education Ministry in Uganda has often reassured head-teachers of Schools to maintain the enrollment of six year olds to the first year of Primary education. School head-teachers are provided the authority by Government to admit or enroll children into their respective Schools. As such these head-teachers are cautioned against enrolling five year olds, but may enroll seven year olds. This is because children aged six and above are considered by the Education Ministry to be with appropriate mental capacity to deal with the curriculum at Grade one level.

#### **2.4.2 Grading Structure in Uganda's Primary Education.**

The purpose of this section is in displaying the mechanism used to grade pupils in Primary Schools in Uganda. In other words, what scores are assigned to pupils based on their outcomes in examinations? This section will aid in providing a background to the fourth chapter dealing with the empirical findings and analysis of pupil performance across the two selected UPE Schools(KPS and NPS).

As already stated pupils sit for national examinations(PLE) at the level of Primary Seven(P.7). On a similar note, pupils in class levels below Primary Seven; Primary six, Primary five, Primary four, Primary three, Primary two and Primary one, sit for examinations but these assessments are not of a national character(MoES,2011). As previously mentioned, students below Primary Seven sit for School based examinations that are set by their respective teachers. Despite these differences in terms of School based exams versus nationalized exams, what is significant is that pupils whether at Primary Seven level or below sit for four subjects; Mathematics, English, Science and Social Studies(MoES,2011). More important is that the pupils at both Primary seven

level and below are graded with 'distinctions, credits, passes and failure' depending on their scores in assessments.

It must be appreciated that in Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Finland, students in elementary School are graded in examinations with labels such as 'A, B, C, D, E and F'(Munene, 2009, p.48). In Uganda, pupils graded with either 'Distinctions(D), Credits(C), Passes(P) or Failures(F).' In other words whenever a student in Primary School sits for exams, his or her results will normally reflect the labels; D, C, P or F wherein D means distinction, C means Credit, P stands for Pass and F for Failure.

Accordingly, distinctions are regarded as excellent scores synonymous with Grades A and B in Norwegian education. Credits are considered as fairly good and are synonymous with Grade C under the Norwegian elementary system. Passes are considered to be average scores and are similar to the D and E grades under the Norwegian elementary Schools. The label 'F' is applicable in both Ugandan and Norwegian education to mean 'failure.' In short in case a pupil obtains a score below average level(D and E), it is considered as a failure.

While discussing the grading structure in Ugandan Primary Schools, it is relevant to highlight that whenever pupils undertake examinations, these exams are marked by School teachers who first of all assign percentage scores to each pupil's script. In other words before any grading begins, pupils are first assigned percentage scores on each of their scripts. These percentage scores simply reflect the magnitude of questions that a pupil answered correctly. Accordingly a pupil registering a 100% score in a Mathematics exam has passed each and every mathematical question set in the exam. Below 40%, a pupil is considered to have failed the examination.

Following this, the grading process comes into play, that is to say the assignment of distinctions, credits, passes and failures. It must be noted that each percentage score reflects a particular grade. for instance a 100% score is viewed as distinction.

Significantly, distinctions just like credits and passes are grouped differently. In other words, distinctions constitute two sub-categories 'distinction 1 and distinction 2' normally abbreviated as D.1 and D.2 respectively. Distinction 1(D.1) is a higher grade than Distinction 2(D.2). Credits constitute 'credit 3, credit 4, credit 5 and credit 6' respectively and are labeled as 'C.3, C.4, C.5 and C.6 respectively.' Each credit is considered higher than the preceding one, for instance credit

3(C.3) is a higher grade than credit 4(C.4) which in turn is higher than credit 5(C.5). Passes comprise of pass 7 and pass 8, abbreviated as Ps.7 and Ps.8, with pass 7(Ps.7) higher than pass 8(P.8). Failures are not regrouped in any way but are simply labeled as Failure 9 or F.9 in short. From this therefore, it is fair to say that the grading scale runs from 1 to 9 with 1 and 2 representing distinctions, 3,4,5 and 6 representing credits, 7 and 8 reflect passes and finally 9 accounts for failures.

On a similar note, the percentage scores on a pupil's script are assigned to each of the grades specified above(1 to 9). In other words, a score of 100% is regarded as a distinction 1(D.1) and not distinction 2(D.2). The summary of the grading process is indicated below. This process as already highlighted involves assigning grades to each of the percentage scores.

**Table 2. The Grading format for pupils in Ugandan Primary Schools.**

Percentages(0-100%)	Grades
80-100	Distinction 1(D.1)
70-79	Distinction 2(D.2)
65-69	Credit 3(C3)
60-64	Credit 4(C4)
55-59	Credit 5(C5)
50-54	Credit 6(C6)
40-49	Pass 7(Ps.7)
35-39	Pass 8(Ps.8)
Below 35	Failure(F.9)

(Source: MoES, 2011,p.45)

From the table above, it is evident that each percentage score obtained by a pupil during examinations has got a corresponding grade. This applies to all examinations whether national or School-based. Just as it is evident that the highest percentage score a pupil can obtain is 100percent, equally so the highest grade that a pupil can obtain is a distinction 1(D.1). Of significance is the need to take note of the percentage ranges that constitute a single grade. for instance looking at the range; 80 to 100 percent reveals a corresponding grade for all percentage scores in that range. This means that whether one pupil obtains 100percent in a test and another pupil obtains 80percent or 90percent in the same test as the former, both are considered to have obtained a grade of Distinction 1(D.1). This despite the difference between 80 percent and 100percent.

Quality performance in Primary Leaving Examinations(PLE) is a must for Primary seven(P.7) pupils who seek admission into top secondary Schools. Just before the P.7 pupils sit for the national exams, they are required to make up to four choices on the Secondary Schools that they seek to enroll in. This is nonetheless dependent on their performance at PLE. The Secondary Schools set their own standard points which they require for pupils seeking entry into their respective Schools. Therefore once the results of the national examinations are released, the head-teachers of all Secondary Schools especially Government aided sit for a two-day selection process wherein they(head-teachers) register the names of pupils who qualify for admission into their respective School and who placed that School as their first choice. Therefore Primary Seven pupils prior to making their School choices are cautioned to always give precedence to the School that they value most of joining for Secondary education.

Top quality Secondary Schools in Uganda such as Kings College Budo(KCB), St Mary's College Kisubi(SMACK), Gayaza High School(GHS), Uganda Martyrs Namugongo Secondary School and Mt. St Mary's Namagunga often set high admission standards. Usually these Schools require Primary Seven pupils to have obtained a minimum of three Distinction.1's(D.1) and only one Distinction.2(D.2) at PLE. As already noted, the Distinction(D) is the highest grade that a pupil may obtain under the Primary education system in Uganda. This means that across the four examinable subjects; Mathematics, Science, English and Social Studies, a pupil at minimum is expected to have obtained a percentage score of 80% in English, 80% in Mathematics, 80% in Science and 75% in Social Studies so as to be admitted to high performing Secondary Schools.

This qualifies for three Distinction 1's in English, Mathematics and Science, with one Distinction.2 in Social studies.

National examinations are sat for at both Primary and Secondary levels. The national examinations for Primary Schools are known as Primary Leaving Examinations and these exams apply to only pupils who have reached the seventh Grade known as Primary Seven Class. What must be noted is that prior to UPE in Uganda, accessing Primary education was a matter of finance (Ezenne, 2012). In short, education was a national service but only for those who were able to meet the cost (Kasente, 2010). Thus prior to 1997 UPE implementation, funding by Government in Primary education was low (Nishimura et al, 2008). This is evidenced by the "80% of direct costs of Public Primary schooling" (Nishimura et al, 2008, p.162) that were met by parents whereas Government accounted for only "20%" (Nishimura et al, 2008, p.162).

## **2.5 UPE Background and Context**

Uganda has undergone reforms in the education sector, one of which being the emergence of UPE in 1997 (Suzuki, 2002). Universal Primary education was introduced in "January 1997" (Ezenne, 2012, p.4) by the current government headed by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (Kasente, 2010). The goal was to ensure increased access to quality and quantity education for all school going aged children, stated to be six years (Ezenne, 2012).

The UPE program owes its origin to the "*United Nations Millennium Development Goals*" (UN 2000; Ezenne, 2012, p.4), one of which sets out to curb the illiteracy rate of youths in developing countries by 2015. In short therefore implementation of UPE in Uganda is a manifestation of one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that seeks to enable Primary education for both boys and girls aged six (Kasente, 2010). As indicated by the MDG target 2, pupil enrollment numbers worldwide have sharply increased from "82% in 1999 to 90% in 2010" (www.un.org/millennium goals). It should be noted however that little emphasis appears developed in matching these enrollment numbers with mechanisms to enhance quality learning.

The idea of implementing Universal Primary education however was first discovered at the 1990 "*Education For All*", (EFA) world conference held in Jomtien, Thailand" (Ezenne, 2012, p.39).

Uganda was a signatory at this conference and committed to reaching this goal through a "Government Whitepaper on Education, 1992"(Ezenne, 2012, p.39). The implementation of '*Education For All*' however did not take center stage till "January, 1997"(Ezenne, 2012, p.40).

With the implementation of Universal Primary education in 1997 , Primary school tuition in Ugandan Schools was waived by the Government (Kasente, 2010). As a result of this waiver, enrollment numbers under Primary education increased as evidenced by "3,000,000 in 1996 to 5.3 million in 1997"(Ezenne, 2012, p.40). As stated by the 2004 UPE Stakeholders Hand Book, this number reached "7.6 million" by 2003(Ezenne, 2012, p.40). Despite these sharp increases in enrollment, it is important to note that since 2002, Uganda's Government specified the composition of children per family as between 1 to 4 no more that would benefit from Universal Primary education. To match the high pupil enrollment numbers, was an increase in teacher recruitment from"103,331 in 1997 to 145,703 in 2004"(MoES,2005 cited by Nishimura et al,2008,p.162). Similarly School construction met increases stated as"10,490 in 1997 to 14,816 in 2004"(MoES,2005 cited by Nishimura et al,2008,p.162). Despite Government meeting these costs, parents were demanded to provide support for "school uniforms, meals, exercise books, local materials for classroom construction"(Mehrotra& Delamonica,1998; Black et al., 1999 cited by Nishimura et al, 2008, p.162).

With Uganda's UPE implementation in 1997, the attention was placed on the "local school management"(MoES, 1998 cited by Suzuki, 2002, p.245). One such group of local managers are the Local Councils charged with supervising the usage of UPE capitation fund (Suzuki, 2002) within every district. This fund is a necessity for each UPE School to support development in all forms. Another relevant group that forms part of the focus of my study is the School Management Committee(SMC) with the duty of ensuring the day to day operation of Primary Schools (Suzuki, 2002). This Suzuki (2002) defines as the right of every Primary School. To validate the essentiality of the SMCs requires a review of the Uganda Government's 1998 stand on UPE. Accordingly "the successful implementation of UPE greatly depends on the School Management Committees"(MoES, 1998, p.17 cited by Suzuki, p.245).

The Government of Uganda at the 2003 National Conference on UPE (Higgins & Rwanyange, 2005 cited by Compare, 2010) defined the achievements of UPE between 1996 and 2002 in terms of number of schools, enrollments, classroom numbers, number of teacher houses. This is

reflected by the Ugandan Education Ministry's, 2003 reflection of UPE achievements, summarized below:

**Table 3: Achievements of UPE Between 1996 and 2002**

Accomplishments	1996	2002	Increased Difference
Number of Primary Schools	8,531	13,332	4,791
Enrollment	3,000,000	7,300,000	4,300,000
Class Rooms	45,115	69,990	24,885
Teacher Houses	16,422	19,854	3,532

(Source: MoES, 2003; Higgins & Rwanyange, 2005 cited by Compare, 2010, p.14)

Despite these successes in enrollment, on the contrary over the years the Primary schools, staff members as well as UPE stake holders were not adequately empowered to effectively perform their responsibilities (Kasente, 2010). As a result several barriers or vices have emerged under Universal Primary education, most notably a mismatch between high pupil enrolment versus low teacher recruitment, automatic pupil promotion policy, teacher absenteeism, high pupil drop outs, inadequate learning infrastructure and low level of school supervision (Ezenne, 2012). The result of this has been a declining performance trend among most UPE Primary schools, in short academic performance cannot be hailed as a success under UPE in Uganda. The next section therefore addresses these aspects which literature labels as determinants of academic performance in UPE. Community participation as a determinant of performance is not highlighted in the next section as it has already been discussed on a large scale at the beginning of this chapter.

### **2.5.1 What are the Determinants of Academic Performance in UPE Primary schools? An insight on Uganda.**

Academic performance at whatever level of learning is the main goal sought after by education institutions. This is the same with Universal Primary Education in Uganda and despite its growing criticisms, the UPE stakeholders have often stated that accessing quality education and performance remain the sole aim of the program besides admitting high numbers of pupils which the critics often refer to. Accordingly certain policies and activities have been undertaken since 1997 to streamline the achievement of quality education, a prerequisite for high performance. These policies and activities is what I term as determinants. These determinants as well incorporate the Scholarly literature on academic performance in UPE. In short the determinants of academic performance in UPE Schools are not my own creation but rather a combined effort of stakeholder policy and published literatures. This section critically examines the research question II on determinants of academic performance in UPE. In short, the determinants of school performance are not necessarily my own but are rather generated from published literature in this regard.

### **2.5.2 Introduction**

As earlier indicated, the exposure of all children aged six years to education and the achievement of quality academic performance are the landmark of a revised UPE Policy(2003) in Uganda. In other words, during its founding stages, UPE in Uganda centered on quantity without incorporating mechanisms to promote quality education in these densely populated Schools. Nonetheless the Central Government created an Education Sector Strategic Plan(2003) with special attention on the need for pupils attending UPE Schools to attain quality learning experiences. Thus it is common to witness several children(pupils) leaving their respective homes for School every morning and returning home in the afternoon. Following the implementation of the education sector strategic plan(2003), a number of features cropped up among UPE Schools that have been often labeled as measures to attain education accessibility and academic performance. Accordingly I consider these features as performance determinants but to do so is not to undermine other determinants that other researchers have developed. In this study therefore, the determinants of academic performance relate to pupil enrollment levels, promotion policy, school facilities and feeding, teacher availability versus absenteeism and level

of teacher education. It must be re-emphasized that these aspects are specifically developed in relation to Uganda. These issues are raised in literature such as by Munene(2009), MoES(2011) and Ezenne(2012).

#### (I) Pupil Enrollment

Pupil enrollment means the manner in which children are admitted in Elementary or Primary Schools. In other words does a School admit high numbers of pupils or rather low pupil numbers? Whichever way it is, head-teachers in Primary Schools often undertake the enrolment process for new entrants at the lowest level of elementary school, which is Grade one or Primary one class. For this research though, I shall label the different classroom levels for pupils as Primary one, Primary two, Primary three, Primary four, Primary five, Primary six and Primary seven. Therefore Primary one consists of pupils most of whom are six years old. This is the age considered by the GoU for children to be exposed to learning under Primary education. Pupil enrollment numbers are one determinant affecting quality education in UPE. These have been witnessed since the advent of UPE in 1997 where high enrollments did not offer the pupils a conducive learning environment(Ezenne, 2012). It is important to note that when pupil enrollment is high, the “School facilities and resources”(Ezenne, 2012, p.120) in schools are over-utilized to meet the demands of these numbers. However the resources invested in UPE schools are too minimal to address these high numbers. The result of this has been high dropout numbers among pupils at all class levels most notably in the junior Primary classes(primary one, two and three)(Ezenne, 2012). This is indicated by the 22% pupils that were able to complete Primary seven(senior class level) in 2003 having started Primary one on the onset of UPE in 1997 (UPE Handbook,2004).

The high enrollment need not be pointed out as a wrongful practice, but rather a means by which pupils most especially from remote communities may access Primary education, hence the assertion, *'Education For All'*(EFA). What is problematic is that the Schools constructed to accommodate UPE pupils are not fully equipped to offer a fruit able learning experience. On the contrary these UPE Schools consisting of high pupil numbers have instead become battlegrounds for classroom space, classroom furniture and Scholastic material. In reality when classroom space, furniture and Scholastic materials are overstrained, overtime it means that preceding

entrants in a UPE School may experience poor quality education because the resources have already been over utilized by their predecessors in higher class levels.

Another impact of high enrollment towards academic performance is that most UPE Schools having resource insufficiency engage in uniform misguided practices. With this has emerged a common practice in Schools and this concerns focusing on only Primary four, Primary five, Primary six and Primary seven pupils(senior class levels) as opposed to Primary three, Primary two and Primary one pupils(junior class levels). The focus is about regular teaching as well as utilizing School resources for those in senior classes. The reason behind this is a uniform perception among head-teachers in most UPE Schools that senior students as opposed to junior ones are more willing to learn and exercise obedience to teachers. This is a misleading practice which undermines the capacity of junior pupils(Primary one, two and three) to gain curriculum knowledge sufficient or adequate for their learning in senior classes(Primary four, five, six and seven). Thus it is no wonder that in most UPE Schools, a section of pupils from Primary four, Primary five, Primary six and Primary seven classes are unable to construct a single sentence in English or recite the letters in Alphabetical order.

## (II) Level of School Facilities

School facilities may foster or undermine quality performance in Schools. These facilities include Classrooms, School furniture, Scholastic materials like textbooks and chalk, as well as hygiene facilities. To begin with the classroom facility, in Uganda there remain continuous quests for constructing sizable and enough classrooms so as to accommodate the often high pupil numbers enrolled in UPE Schools. As such, a census was conducted on the quantity of students lacking classrooms in UPE Schools. This evidence is provided by the 2010 statistical abstract of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics(UBS) on the number of pupils lacking classrooms for study purposes. The following table indicates the classroom dilemma that has proved a challenge to education policy makers in Uganda.

**Table 4: Number of classroom facilities versus pupil enrollment**

<b>Class Level</b>	<b>Enrollment number</b>	<b>Pupils lacking classrooms</b>	<b>Percentage of total enrollment</b>
Primary one	1,943,552	937,561	48.2%
Primary two	1,335,596	540,078	40.4%
Primary three	1,329,689	458,341	34.5%
Primary four	1,302,984	394,612	30.3%
Primary five	1,065,932	261,402	24.5%
Primary six	852,364	162,163	19.0%
Primary seven	544,531	59,297	10.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,374,648</b>	<b>2,813,454</b>	<b>33.6%</b>

(Source: UBS, 2010, p.11)

From this table it is clear that classroom shortage is a major problem affecting pupils particularly those in class levels; Primary one, two and three as opposed to those in higher classes in particular Primary six and Primary seven classes. This reemphasizes the practice already mentioned of concentrating on the welfare of pupils in senior classes as opposed to their counterparts in lower Primary. In short where pupils lack sizable and well structured classrooms, their capacity to concentrate and listen attentively during lessons is undermined.

In Uganda the School furniture comprises of desks and benches which can accommodate at least four pupils depending on the length. With such furniture in place, situations of pupils seating on the classroom floor are minimized. However this furniture policy has hardly minimized such instances, because several UPE Schools still lack adequate furniture for all classrooms. Once again education analysts have observed that the senior classrooms(primary seven, six, five and four) as opposed to junior ones have a high degree of furniture to accommodate all pupils. More

importantly, analysts have stated that given the high dropout rates among pupils in junior classes, it is no wonder that the furniture and classrooms for senior pupils are accommodative to pupils. In other words, senior pupils are few in number as compared to their counterparts in junior classes hence they are well accommodated with enough desks or benches. Analysts have often observed that pupils in Primary six and Primary seven classrooms are well spaced as justified by two pupils occupying a single desk, as opposed to the six pupils squeezing on a single desk in junior classes. In short therefore shortage of School furniture coupled with high pupil enrollment simply deters rather than supports a conducive classroom environment for learning.

Scholastic materials serve as teacher aides while conducting lessons to pupils. Thus it is common to witness teachers conducting lessons while writing on a blackboard so as to demonstrate to all pupils. Assuming that there is no blackboard to write on or chalk to write, pupils may be unable to observe curriculum firsthand and may rely on teacher narrations which may contain errors that often are not corrected. In other words, pupils are not fully exposed to curriculum in situations of teacher narrations. It must be observed that the GoU through the Education Ministry formalized the practice of teaching curriculum through the use of blackboard and chalk instruments. This means that teachers are not expected to merely narrate curriculum. Education commentators on UPE in Uganda have nonetheless observed that in 2011 a quarter of UPE Schools lacked chalk and blackboards, thus conducting lessons through narrations that are not appropriate for pupil learning. Textbooks are vital in as far as testing pupil knowledge on curriculum through assigning exercises obtained from the textbooks to the pupils. Textbooks are written in relation to the different levels; senior and junior Primary classes. Equally relevant is that textbooks compliment the syllabuses of each respective subject; Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and English. These textbooks tend to have chapters addressing different but vital knowledge. Thus a teacher may observe relevant syllabi in textbooks that may not have been given recognition initially when designing the curriculum to undertake. In order for pupils to benefit effectively from textbooks necessitates exposing them to tests or exercises from a variety of textbooks on a single Subject. Of significance is that the Education Ministry is charged with the responsibility of supplying textbooks to all UPE Schools. On the contrary, this undertaking has hardly been realized. Thus a small number of textbooks are assigned to each School and may be outdated. In other words, several textbooks undergo refinements and revised editions which are beneficial to

pupil learning. Therefore even the small number of textbooks assigned to Schools may lack the necessary adjustments.

Hygiene is a concern for all Schools whether or not UPE. As already mentioned, most UPE Schools are remotely located making it hard to access sanitation and sufficient water so as to ensure regular cleaning of the classrooms and latrines. With such poor sanitation, pupils tend to experience diseases most commonly Cholera and Dysentery. This retards their capacity to understand curriculum while at the same time accounting for dropouts.

### (III) School Feeding Program

The School Feeding program is another challenge encountered in the implementation of UPE in Uganda (Ezenne, 2012). The feeding in this case applies to pupils while at School as well as a lunch program for teachers. The Education Ministry in Uganda has over the years directed parents to raise funds and support the provision of mid-day meals to their children while at the same time contributing towards teachers' lunch. and meeting the with the responsibility of providing regular mid-day meals (Ezenne, 2012) to their children, so as to enable them complete their daily classes. Nonetheless families vary and as a result certain parents voiced their concern over having a heavy cost incurred as a result of having up to four school going children (Kasente, 2010). The result of this was a growing number of “malnourished pupils” (Ezenne, 2012, p.122) that cannot adequately sustain regular periods of class instruction, thus limiting the potentialities of performance.

Commentaries on the state of UPE Schools in Uganda reveal that pupils often rely on dried maize and sugarcane as a source of food at School. Thus rather than children attend class, they seat right in the quadrangle of the School eating maize or sugarcane with no concern for attending lessons. Accordingly pupils spend the entire day in the scorching sunlight in search for edibles or else spend the day hungry. This is the situation most commonly occurring in rural settings. It can therefore be argued that pupils studying in UPE Schools experience two-different worlds; the urban world where communities are highly supportive to the School feeding and the rural world featuring complex hindrances and low participation levels by the communities towards pupil welfare. Whether this has to do with the socio-economic status of parents simply serves to indicate that no factor, in this case urban or rural dwelling is complete in itself, but

rather interplays with other factors like socio-economic status to create either a positive or negative outcome.

#### (IV) Promotion Policy

This has more to do with policy matters and decisions undertaken on whether or not to adopt a particular policy. Accordingly, what measures, decisions or policies are made in regards to pupil advancement from one class level such as Primary three(P.3) to a higher class level such as Primary four(P.4)? Literature reveals two common policies; automatic promotion and promotion based on performance. Under automatic promotion, all pupils in a School regardless of their performance are made to progress to the preceding higher classroom. In this sense, repetition is non-operational. The Education Ministry in Uganda saw it necessary to maintain the right of pupils accessing basic knowledge at whatever level in Primary School. Thus repetition was seen as a hindrance to this right because pupils who repeat a particular class are denied access to curriculum knowledge in the preceding higher classroom.

On the contrary, critics of the automatic promotion policy have demanded that all UPE Schools should be free to define or adopt their own type of policy relating to pupil progress. As a result, School heads together with the School management have sought different strategies in regards to pupil progress. This created a dichotomy with certain Schools adhering to automatic promotion while others implemented 'repetition'. The proponents of the repetition approach saw it necessary that pupils who demonstrate performance below the average level need to repeat class and gain better performance so as to proceed to the next classroom. In other words it means that only pupils who demonstrate academic achievement above the average yardstick will be promoted to higher classrooms. The performance yardstick is usually 40% wherein pupils are expected to have an average score not below 40% in assessments and this is in relation to all four curriculum subjects; Math, English, Science and Social Studies. The 40% yardstick for pupil progression is a brainchild of the Education Ministry despite its support for the automatic promotion.

Important observations were made by UPE analysts as to the outcome of pupil performance among two Schools in Uganda that implemented both policies(automatic promotion versus repetition). Among the School that adhered to the automatic policy, it was realized that the learning capacity of pupils in all classrooms was low. Accordingly,

*it was revealed that only 1 out of 10 pupils of Primary three class were able to recite a Primary two class story and calculate Primary two class mathematical exercises. In the Primary Seven class, 8 out of 10 pupils were unable to comprehend a primary two class story or complete a Mathematical division and multiplication exercise (The 2012 Annual Learning Assessment (ALA) in Uganda). In short, this reflected that a student in a higher-classroom (Primary Seven) was unable to solve curriculum assignments for a lower class (Primary two). The same measurements were performed to a single School that implemented the repetition policy.*

*Results revealed that 8 out of 10 Primary three pupils recited a story belonging to the Primary two class and were able to complete a Primary two mathematical exercise. Among the Primary seven class, only 2 out of 10 pupils failed to comprehend a Primary two class story while reflecting difficulty in handling Mathematical equations on the curriculum (The Annual Learning Assessment, 2012).*

It can be concluded that the automatic promotion policy under UPE is non-beneficial to academic performance despite maintaining pupil advancement to a higher class level. Despite this conclusion, it must be appreciated that several factors interplay to determine the outcome in pupil performance. As already mentioned, the shortage of School facilities creates a poor classroom environment for learning. Therefore it can be argued that despite the influence automatic promotion bears on pupils, quality performance may be made all the more undermined by poor classroom facilities and hygiene.

#### (V) Teacher attendance versus absenteeism

Teacher absenteeism is a quite common spectacle under primary schools operating in the shadow of UPE. Estimates by the Uganda DHS Education Data Survey (2001) place 10% of teachers as the daily number absconding from duty. When this occurs, no learning can take place (Ezenne, 2012). However it is vital to identify the reasons for the occurrence of absenteeism. Quite commonly expressed by the teaching staff is the absence of staff quarters (houses) near the school premises (Munene, 2009). Accordingly, they (teachers) trek long distances every morning and evening to complete their daily tasks defined by with the school program and return early enough to their residences. Furthermore teachers have over time expressed dissatisfaction over their salary scale, demanding an increase to cater for the increased work rate as a result of high

pupil numbers in UPE (Munene, 2009). As of 2014, teachers' demands have become illusions since no attention is provided to address their demands. This in turn accounts for the common occurrence of deserted classrooms by teachers despite the presence of pupils in classrooms.

#### (VI) Teacher Qualifications

The necessary role of teachers in promoting quality education is cited in the Ugandan Government's (1992) "Education white paper"(GoU,1992, p.152; Higgins & Rwanyange, 2005; Compare, p.18) that states that

*"No education system can be better than the quality of teachers, nor can a country be better than the quality of its education. Hence it is the quality of teachers that ultimately determines the lot of the nation."*

This emphasizes the need to regularly train teachers in Teacher colleges on the changing perspectives in curriculum. At the same time, it is crucial to ensure regular recruitment of teachers so as to manage the pupil-teacher ratios (Higgins & Rwanyange, 2005; Compare, 2010).

The World Bank(2012) conducted a survey known as the Service Delivery Indicator(SDI) which focused on teacher qualifications and abilities in Uganda. To begin with, it revealed two scenarios; firstly, that only 83percent of teachers underwent training in the existing teacher colleges. On the contrary, the second scenario reflected that only 17percent of teachers have not undergone relevant training in the teacher colleges and yet they are teaching in certain Schools(World Bank, 2012). As the SDI notes, these cases of un-trained teachers are a common occurrence in remote areas with few cases among the urban centers. More to that, the SDI reveals that only 19percent of teachers have a mastery and complete knowledge of the curriculum of the Class-level(Primary one, two, three, four, five, six and seven) that they teach(World Bank, 2012). Out of the 2,214 teachers that were surveyed across 400 primary Schools, most of the teachers scored 65percent and 58percent in Mathematics(Numeracy) and English(literacy) assessments respectively(World Bank, 2012). On a similar note, only one out of five teachers from UPE Schools obtained a score of 80percent in assessment concerning the curriculum they teach(World Bank, 2012).

### 2.5.3 Conclusion on Literature Review

The study of relevant literature on community participation and UPE revealed that community involvement in education can take on many forms and operate with diverse responsibilities. Equally noteworthy is that community participation is quite a complex discourse that has been subjected to numerous debates that are aimed at highlighting what a community is or is not. This has resulted into multiple definitions on what a community comprises of as well as the meaning of participation. This is eminent in the absence of a single definition in relation to the concepts; community and participation. In regards to community, Lee & Newby(1983) Hurst(1985), Bray(1997; 2003) and Redding(2001) as already mentioned have developed different but relevant conceptualizations on communities. Similarly participation has not escaped from diverse inquiries on its meaning. As earlier discussed, Fitriah(2010) notes that scholars employing the participation concept do observe its diverse meanings and this in turn has resulted into challenges in developing a single and applicable working definition. These diverse meanings were initiated by Scholars such as Friere(1970), Chambers(1983), UNRISD(1984), Zimmerman(1990), Ostrom et al(1993), Shaeffer(1994), Rahman(1995) and Cornwall & Gaventa(2001). The respective viewpoints of these scholars have been discussed under the participation section of the literature review.

The review of literature stressed the need for the SMCs and PTAs to fulfill their community responsibilities. These responsibilities are generalized as support for classroom instruction, school management through occupying advisory platforms and resource mobilization(Williams, 1997 cited by Fushieni,2005). More importantly, a review of the Education Act(2008) of Uganda provides specific responsibilities that the SMC and PTA are required to fulfill. This means that community responsibilities need to be examined further in the context or geographical area of study. In other words, it should not be assumed that the SMC and PTA responsibilities in Uganda are identical to those in Tanzania or Ghana. It is crucial to examine the education provisions and formalities of each state so as to minimize inappropriate generalizations.

In regards to academic performance, different factors besides community participation were highlighted that may account for the different levels of performance among UPE schools. This in turn enables the realization as to how effective or crucial community participation is towards school performance.

This was the first part of chapter two and it earmarked a review of literature. The second part of this chapter presents the theoretical or conceptual premises that may provide models for initiating community responsibilities in education. In other words, what forms of community participation can be deduced from theory.

## **2.6 Conceptual Framework**

Having located the relevant literature and debates surrounding community participation and academic performance in part one of this chapter, this second part locates the conceptual knowledge that provides an explanation and insight into the dynamics of to the notion; community participation in School performance. It must be noted that the conceptual frameworks employed specifically for this study have already been tested and applied in similar studies conducted before this research. In other words the conceptual premises indicated in this chapter will serve the purpose of generalization to ascertain their applicability in this context. I begin by indicating the already existing diverse approaches on community involvement in Schools. From this will emerge a specification on three approaches which are the Epstein Involvement framework, Arnstein ladder of Participation and World Bank Empowerment Indicators. These three approaches constitute the theoretical or conceptual basis of the study. More importantly is that these three frameworks served as the basis for deducing variables that were implemented in the field. Therefore this second part forms the background of determining the variables to be discussed under the third and final part of this chapter.

### **2.6.1 Diverging Conceptual Frameworks on Community Participation in education**

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of two community groups on the academic achievement of School children. Similarly, there have existed studies conducted in the past decades as well as those most recent which have sought to explain what and how community empowerment influence the participation of its members in School advancement. The relevance of understanding these conceptual factors will enable adequate explanation of the challenges or hindrances faced by communities in both Kangulumira C/U Primary School(KPS) and Nakakandwa R/C Primary School(NPS).

Bourdieu(1984;1983;1994) emphasizes that factors such as capacity, esteem, income earnings, network connections will influence the degree to which parents as one community group undertake their School responsibilities with expected outcomes. This nonetheless creates an inequality among parents wherein those parents with high incomes may influence the decisions to be undertaken regarding School program implementation. More specifically, Ho(1995) recognizes that community personnel with high socio-economic statuses occupy dominant positions in School planning and management personnel. It must be noted that every member of the School Management committee(SMC) is a parent whose child or children study in that particular School(Ho,1995). This in the long run affords parents belonging to such groups with the clout to negotiate with Head Teachers and teachers on programs that should be implemented. These policies are regarded as beneficial to the children of the SMC personnel even if not stated publicly. Thus Ho(1995) reaffirms that the members of School Management create decisions that are suitable to promoting the welfare of their children without considering the entire pupil diversity a School.

From this inspiration therefore some researchers have adopted variables in their studies that re-emphasize the impact of socio-economic status on the level of participation and in turn determining the level of pupil achievement (Ho, 1995). These include issues dealing with career or employment and literacy level(education) that either promote or constrain parental involvement in their children's learning experiences in Schools. Strand(2007) in a study on low achievement pupils in English Schools adopted variables in the form of School management and parental education levels, level of income from parents, as well as any motivation or inspiration if any that parents educated provide to their children. These will not necessarily be adopted in this research, but rather are a reflection of the changing nature of conceptual thought expressed in discussions about community participation vis-à-vis academic performance. Accordingly Strand(2007) concluded that the differential aspects in terms of parental education levels and income did not account for the difference in academic achievement among students. To Strand(2007) the gaps in pupil performance had more to do with pupil expression and discipline as well as teacher motivation.

From this discussion therefore it is essential to highlight the need for Governments to continuously empower community members such as parents so as to contribute and support the pupils' learning experience as well as serve as a motivation to teachers .

Following the previous section, it can be asserted that there exist different Schools of thought centered on community participation in School performance. In this study, the conceptual frameworks apply to Arnstein's(1968) Ladder of Citizen participation, Epstein's(1987) Involvement framework and World Bank's() empowerment framework. It must be noted nonetheless that these three frameworks reflect the ideas already presented in section 3.1 of this Chapter.

To begin with, I discuss the rationale of employing each of the three frameworks, a process which King et al (1994) view as relevant in providing answers to research questions raised in a study.

As already mentioned, the conceptual perspectives in this study have been applied in previous empirical inquiries on community participation in Schools. Accordingly the Arnstein's(1968) ladder of citizen participation and World Bank empowerment framework are significantly expressed in a study by Masue, S.O(2010); Empowerment of School Committees in Tanzania. The Epstein Involvement Framework is centrally applied by Essuman, A(2009); Perspectives on Community-School Relations in Ghana. Similarly a study by Crites, V. C(2008) on Parent and Community involvement; A Case study, offers an adequate account and application of the Involvement framework.

To be specific, this research focused on Communities and their impact on School performance. One such community is the PTA comprising of the parents and teachers. Accordingly, the Epstein Involvement framework is one of the most celebrated discourses on parental participation in child learning. More importantly, it is based on the School context and explains various mechanisms that parents may adopt to ensure that quality learning is offered to pupils. The ladder of Citizen participation by Arnstein indicates diverse stages of participation that the parents, teachers and management committee may consider in their relations with the School. In other words its applicability is not limited to parents only as Epstein provides. Nonetheless as will be indicated, the Arnstein ladder provides a central discussion on the relevance of power in

each stage of participation . This therefore in turn provided the basis for the employment of four empowerment concepts that were initiated by the World Bank. In other words, the two frameworks by Epstein and Arnstein label the various responsibilities that communities may undertake in promoting School progress. However what they do not provide are the mechanisms which may ensure genuine, active or high community participation in School progress. The World Bank stipulates these mechanisms as *four empowerment strategies; access to information, inclusion, accountability and local Organizational capacity*. Knowledge of these mechanisms will provide an account as to why some community groups are unable to fulfill their School responsibilities. The logic would appear that these groups are disempowered. This will provide an explanation to the fifth(V) research question on the extent to which communities undertake their responsibilities. In other words what influences the level of community participation in Schools.

Scholars have attempted to develop criteria governing the choice of theory selected in research. From this attempt therefore, King et al (1994) define a theory as vital to research if it has firstly "observable implications" and secondly, "maximizes concreteness" (King et al, 1994, p.109). The theoretical discussion in this research centered on empowerment and how it is crucial for effective participation that will in turn support or undermine pupil performance depending on the degree of community empowerment.

In regards to the 'observable implications' (King et al, 1994, p.109), empowerment theory defines several indicators that serve as models or channels through which individuals, institutions and communities can function effectively. As argued by the World Bank (2002), for communities to function adequately in developing society, requires them to satisfy each of the four empowerment indicators developed by the World Bank. These are access to information, inclusion, accountability and local organizational capacity. Therefore empowerment viewed or observed from the above indicators influences the level of community participation in Schools which in turn will have implications on promoting or undermining academic performance of pupils.

Concreteness of theory concerns the ability to adopt concepts that are "observable" as opposed to "unobservable" (King et al, 1994, p.109). These concepts are used specifically in theory formulation (King et al, 1994). However despite their relevance in this regard, the concepts may

become an obstacle to evaluating theory unless they are expressed in a clear and observable way so that their implications can be measurable (King et al, 1994). Accordingly therefore, access to information, inclusion, accountability and local organizational capacity which as well serve as concepts are measurable in relation to SMC and PTA involvement in Primary Schools. These four concepts are measurable based on data obtained through field observations, interviews and documentary analysis. More importantly these four concepts are not abstract as are concepts like "culture, intelligence and national interest" (King et al, 1994, p.109).

### **2.6.2 The Conceptual framework of Community responsibilities in Schools**

The purpose of this section is to provide a theoretical discussion on the fourth(iv) research question concerning; *What are the responsibilities of Communities in UPE Schools?* In this section therefore I discuss the two frameworks by Arnstein(1968) and Epstein(1987) in an attempt to diagnose the diverse responsibilities that communities in Schools may assume. I begin with the Epstein framework after which is an account of the Citizen ladder. Critical reflections on each framework are provided. The aspect of empowerment is introduced later as a separate section highlighting the mechanisms by which participation can be effective or **undermined**.

### **2.6.3 Epstein's Involvement Framework**

This relevant discourse is a brainchild of Joyce.L. Epstein(1987) and indicates measures that can be undertaken by parents and to promote quality education and in turn academic performance for their children. It must be noted once again that parents are community actors who have defined responsibilities in relation to their children's education. Furthermore, these measures as already stated provide the foundation for several discussions, debates, conferences and studies on community-School relations.

Parental involvement is viewed as performing an instrumental role in providing education opportunities to their children while at the same time inspecting the learning experience of their children while at School(Epstein, 1987). Epstein(1987) notes that parental involvement in education comprises family-community-School partnerships which enable parents to realize and

appreciate the relevance of participating in the learning experience of their children. As Muller(2009) indicates, the interconnectedness among families, communities and Schools are serving the scope and functions of School education. In addition, they offer a platform where parental activeness is strengthened which in turn promotes their capacity. Thus it is often indicated that promoting quality education is not limited to only the School-gates but rather is a concern for the outside community members(Muller, 2009).

Epstein(1987) drew six categories of involvement which parents or guardians may adopt to ensure that their children obtain a conducive learning experience. What makes the Epstein framework one of the most celebrated concepts in parental-School participation is that it does not merely list or discuss the different involvement styles. But rather the impacts of each involvement stage are placed into perspective. More importantly, these impacts examined in reference to parents, students and teachers. These six types of involvement by the Epstein framework are parenting, communication, volunteering, leaning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community(Epstein, 1987, pp.1-6).

To begin with **parenting**, Epstein views this stage as crucial in the construction of a home based environment that is ideal for the School children to revise their School work. Accordingly for this to occur parents must be subjected to certain five undertakings, that Epstein(1987, p.1) terms as "sample practices." In other words the local authorities are the ones to initiate these practices and ensure that families are oriented or exposed to them(Epstein, 1987). These practices are (I) *proposed mechanisms of creating a conducive friendly environment for child learning*, (II) *Orientations through public speeches, workshops and video programming related to child motivation*, (III) *literacy programs for parents* (IV) *charity programs that aid families with health support and good feeding* (V) *Visitation to Schools by families and meetings among families within a particular locality*. In short it is argued that when these aspects are established, it will enable families to better understand the School institution on one hand and the School institution will as well understand the parents(Epstein,1987). As a result of this understanding, families will evaluate Schools as having great value for their children. Equally important as well is that the Schools will recognize and emphasize home-based support to pupils.

Despite these positive attributes about parenting, there do exist challenges in the fulfillment of the already mentioned practices(Epstein, 1987). The first challenge involves ensuring

information provision to the entire parent-body besides those who attend the workshops or School meetings. In other words there are several parents that do not attend these discussions but are highly interested in implementing such home-based practices (Epstein, 1987). Thus they should not be sidelined basing on their absence. Secondly parents during these workshops or meetings tend to be passive attendants rather than active attendants and yet their voice is crucial in sharing experiences with each other. Thus it is vital for the parents to openly voice their opinions on issues like tradition(culture), background and children's likes, dislikes and needs (Epstein, 1987). Thirdly is ensuring that the said information or opinion by parents above is examined so as to make it explicit and appealing to child success in elementary training (Epstein, 1987)

Epstein (1987) indicates a variety of aftermaths that will be realized after parenting is established. These results are beneficial and apply to pupils, parents and teachers (Epstein, 1987). In relation to pupils, respect and obedience to parents or elders is enhanced (Epstein, 1987). Secondly, it ensures the time-tabling of tasks to ensure that household chores do not interrupt with School exercises (home-work) as the parents supervise their activities (Epstein, 1987). In addition, the pupils obtain increased perceptions on the necessity of Schooling (Epstein, 1987). At the very least pupils' performance is expected to improve (Epstein, 1987). In relation to parents, a better and informed awareness on promoting child learning even at home. Secondly, it creates better understanding of the diverse challenges faced by other parents. Furthermore, a sense of responsibility and concern is felt from the School alongside other parents (Epstein, 1987). Regarding the teachers, the awareness about pupil diversity in terms of interests is improved. Secondly, parental involvement is highly respected and valued by teachers.

The second involvement means is **communicating** that aims at establishing channels through which information flows from School to home and home to School especially in regards to child performance (Epstein, 1987). Accordingly these channels include; (I) *holding meetings with parents at least once per year*, (II) *ensuring that language interpreters are in place to cater for the parent diversity*, (III) *weekly posting of each pupil's on-going performance to their respective family*, (III) *discussion between a head-teacher and parents whose children underperform and finally* (IV) *supplying memos, circulars and statements to parents on the need to promote talent and develop skills among their children while at home* (Epstein, 1987).

Just as with the parenting stage, Epstein(1987) develops a number of challenges that may hinder effective communication. Firstly, the readable such as circulars or memos should be developed with precise clarity so as to be understood(Epstein,1987). Therefore it is not a matter of simply circulating information, but this information must be as clear enough. Secondly, in terms of both spoken and written communication is the aspect of language barrier(Epstein,1987). In other words it is quite challenging to formulate one readable or spoken language that all parents may understand.

Communicating is viewed as relevant to pupils, parents and teachers(Epstein,1987). Concerning pupils, awareness is made towards School related policy and disciplinary measures. With the parents, it provides knowledge on School programs and policies(Epstein,1987). Secondly it ensures that parents consistently monitor the progress of their children's class work in relation to the School's standards and policies(Epstein,1987).

(Epstein,1987). Teachers are able to realize their own abilities in communication. More to that, teachers become knowledgeable about parental views regarding pupil progress and supporting programs.

**Volunteering** is the third aspect under the Involvement framework and concerns practices that are viewed as beneficial in supporting School standards and the pupils' learning experiences(Epstein,1987). These practices are unlimited and can therefore be undertaken by any personnel and at any conducive time-frame besides the usual School meetings and Class days(Epstein,1987). Accordingly such practices entail (I) *parental inspection or patrolling of School premises so as to bolster security of their children while in school*, (II) *Informed parents communicate to non-informed parents about programs and School events that have been scheduled or rescheduled* and (III) *training pupils, teachers and parents in skills development*(Epstein,1987).

The first challenge arising in this stage relates to the representativeness of the volunteers(Epstein,1987). Therefore its essential to limit monopolization of this voluntary work by wealthy or high status families. The other families not recognized as high status deserve a place on this volunteer platform. Secondly concerns the aspect of working-class parents that volunteer(Epstein,1987). Such parents experience difficulties in managing both their personal

work load vis-à-vis School volunteering. Thus the School heads must be devise a time-table for such parents so as to ensure that flexibility is maintained.

The results of voluntary programs run across pupils, parents and teachers. Concerning pupils, their skill in communicating effectively with adults is developed. Parents acquire self esteem or confidence through undertaking activities in their children's Schools alongside so as to promote School progress(Epstein,1987). In other words, once these activities promote desired outcomes, then parents feel obliged and confident of their skills. Secondly, parents become aware of the recognition by the School towards their work(Epstein,1987). To the teachers, this serves as a reliable avenue through which parents can be often called upon to participate in activities requiring a collective effort(Epstein,1987).

**Home Learning** is another activity that Epstein(1987) defines as a means of involvement. The central idea under this stage *is in providing relevant information to parents on the need to monitor children's Class work as well as well as initiate co-curricular activities that are supportive and not detrimental to the child's success.* Accordingly therefore, Epstein(1987) cites a number of practices that may transform this cause into a reality. It must be noted however that these practices relate to both family(home) and School policies. In other words, these practices are defined by the School and are to be implemented in homes(Epstein, 1987), hence the label 'home learning'.

Theses home learning practices relate to; first of all *information provision on skills required for each child(student) in relation to his or her level of learning*(Epstein,1987) Thus the skills expected of pupils in lower elementary School are different from those expected of the pupils in upper elementary. Equally important is the nature or type of curriculum subject wherein the skills expected for a mathematics topic may differ from those of Social Studies or English. Secondly, Epstein(1987) recommends that *information relating to home-work rules and policies need to be provided to families* so as to ensure that pupils maintain the same standard of classroom organization at home. Thirdly, *time-tables should be drawn which provide specific hours where children interact with their parents* in as far as reflecting on their(children) learning experience in School(Epstein,1987). Parents are expected to provide as motivation to their children during such interactions. Furthermore, in relation to the curriculum subjects, *it is required that pupils undertake different but appropriate reading or revision styles for each*

*subject* whether *Mathematics, English, Science or History*(Epstein,1987) Nonetheless this undertaking is not wholly dependent on pupils and as such the School teachers initiate these reading aides and must share this information with parents such that pupils can be aided or monitored during their revision at home. Lastly, Epstein(1987) recommends that parents engage their children in goal setting for each academic term or year, so as to inspire the children to work towards goal satisfaction or attainment.

Epstein(1987) draws up a section of challenges that may arise in the process of undertaking the above practices. One such challenge concerns the formation of a schedule through which pupils interact with their parents in relation to their learning experiences. The challenge in this stage concerns the false generalization that is undertaken when constructing an involvement schedule. Different families have different livelihoods and commitments, thus it should not be assumed that a time-table drawn up will be suitable to all families. However on the contrary any attempt to engage each family into devising a suitable schedule for parent-child interaction would be quite a complex undertaking that necessitates a large time-span to draw up agreements from each respective family on the schedule appropriate to their livelihoods. In short therefore, concerning the reading, revision or interaction schedule, two challenges concerning generalization and time-consuming aspects may be experienced. Secondly concerning the goal-setting aspect, Epstein (1987) cites the habit of defining long term goals rather than short term goals as a common spectacle. In other words, it is quite common to view children (pupils) express their desire to attain certain careers most notably Pilot, Medical-Doctor or Computer technologist. Much as these aspirations are admirable and provide a sense of esteem among pupils, they are farfetched. Also, their(long term goals) impact may not be felt in relation to performance in tests or examinations. In other words parents would rather influence their children on focusing on short-term goals. These would comprise of; rewards to pupils for obtaining high scores in tests, the assurance that they(children) would be admitted to a top quality Secondary School once their performance was standard. These short-term goals would increase the pupils' concentration and urge for reading in the hope of a near reward from parent or entry into a top performing Secondary experience.

The benefits of this home-learning experience are assessed in relation to pupils, parents and teachers. Concerning pupils, this practice promotes a learning attitude among them because they

are accustomed to ideas and curricula both at home and School. Secondly it appears that the home-work completion is an issue enhanced by this practice. This is because as the teachers set curriculum assignment for students to pursue at home, the parents on the other hand cross check to ensure that they are indeed given home-assignments and that they actually write their assignments prior to School attendance. In regards to parents, home-learning provides knowledge to them concerning curriculum instruction, topical areas and expected outcomes. This ensures that parents are elevated in their status or outlook as not being mere parents who simply take and return children from School, but as rather active and informed parents. In short this practice when implemented in schools and homes challenges the ancient notion that 'teachers impart curricula knowledge and training to students while parents simply pay for that service'. It must be noted therefore that supervision of children's classroom notes and assignments is best suited for parents with a background knowledge of the curriculum so as to ascertain the level at which the children are learning in relation to the set curriculum. Concerning the teachers, learning at home is an avenue through which teacher-parent relations are improved. This is because there exist teacher-parent exchanges and disagreements that tend to transcend beyond mere School related policies to personal matters. These exchanges rotate around judgment of one group as inferior and inactive. In other words parents tend to label teachers as lacking commitment to their duties whereas teachers argue that parents are less concerned about monitoring their children's class work because they assume it to be a responsibility of only teachers. Thus to curb such rising concerns, in relation

**Decision making** is Epstein's fifth level of involvement and not only addresses parental concerns but School management concerns as well. Under this stage, *the central idea is about making parents inclusive to the School planning platform*. It is often reflected that before planning occurs, decision making has already been undertaken as to what issue or program to plan for. Therefore whoever is left out of the decision making process may be equally sidelined from the planning process. What Epstein advocates for is the need for an inclusive decision making platform in School under which parents express their decisions alongside School management.

For this to occur, Epstein(1987) recommends the following practices; *the formation of institutions such as Parent-Teacher Associations, advisory boards, School committees in which parents are called upon to undertake leadership responsibilities*. Secondly, *parents need to form*

*Unions as parents only so as to advocate for changes in School management*(Epstein,1987). Thirdly, *regular networking among parents characterized by discussions on pupil welfare and School development*(Epstein,1987). These networks will ensure that decisions are made on policies or plans that the majority of network members identify(Epstein,1987).

Just as with each of the other involvement mechanisms, decision making features a number of possible challenges. One such challenge is that of representativeness under which families may be diverse in terms of culture or ethnicity and socio-economic status(Epstein,1987). Thus the composition of parents on the decision making platform requires an examination so as to ascertain the extent to which diversity in culture and status is adhered to. It would appear democratic to represent the different ethnicities by recruiting parents from each ethnic group respectively as well as economic class level. However this is where the challenge emerges(Epstein, 1987). Although reforms are being advocated for in reference to parental representation, the reality is that in most Schools, these parental associations are run by parents who have high socio-economic class without much consideration of ethnicity(Epstein,1987). The other classes of parents are sidelined from decision making for the association. This practice is perceived by the School leadership as a form of tribute to the high class parents that often make large financial contributions to the School.

In terms of benefits, where parents participate in decision making enhances a sense of pride and awareness among students, most especially those whose parents run the School associations(Epstein,1987). However it must be noted that this practice may serve as a constraint to such students wherein they may deviate into in-disciplined behavior with the awareness that they may not be punished by the School authorities since their parents contribute large sums of assistance to the School(Epstein,1987). In addition it can be argued that parental decision making will create outcomes that are beneficial to the welfare of their children(students). To the parents, decision making promotes a sense of ownership of the School(Epstein,1987). Furthermore teachers are able to identify and review parents' ideas in relation to School development(Epstein,1987).

Epstein (1987) introduces a sixth stage of involvement known as community collaboration under which resources within the community are mobilized and utilized to ensure the implementation of developmental programs in Schools. Equally significant is that these resources promote

parental activity, what Epstein(1987) terms as "family practice"(Epstein, 1987, p.6) in Schools. Nonetheless Epstein(1987) applies the concept, community to mean the entire neighborhood that surrounds each respective School. However as with this study, the community concept is derived from practices by the School Management and Parent-Teacher Association. Therefore I do not go into detail discussing the practices and benefits of Epstein's community collaboration as it is not applicable to this study.

It must be appreciated that the Epstein framework details a strategy that may be adopted by stakeholders in UPE Schools. Even though parents are best suited for these practices, there are those aspects like decision making that the School Management may borrow ear to the underlying practices within decision making. As already stated this framework provides a number of practices mentioned that serve as a theoretical foundation on the responsibilities of communities in UPE Schools. Another significance of the Epstein(1987) framework is that it develops several challenges that may be realized within the conduct of each involvement practice. These challenges already discussed provide the theoretical knowledge towards addressing the aspect of challenges faced by communities in the two UPE Schools that were selected for this research. This is discussed in Chapter 5. Despite this contribution, the framework is limited in a sense that it most of its practices are recommended for Parental involvement as opposed to other personnel like the School administration. This inspired the search for a conceptual framework that appears to be encompassing the community actors in this study(SMC & PTA). The Arnstein Ladder of Citizen participation(1968) serves this function and is discussed in the preceding section 3.1.

#### **2.6.4: A Ladder of Citizen Participation: A Framework into the Dynamics of Participation.**

Just as with the previous section on Epstein's Involvement framework, this section provides a theoretical basis on the forms of community responsibilities that may be undertaken in Schools. Citizen participation is a concept that has received various and differentiated theoretical debates as well as practitioners. However the results of these variations is comparable to the Tower of Babel experience wherein the diverse languages spoken among the Tower builders made it difficult if not impossible to communicate with one another while undermining its completion. In other wards despite the advantage that comes with various viewpoints on a concept, it

nonetheless poses a challenge to create an agreeable infrastructure on how to build genuine participation(Connor, 1988; NCR, 1988).

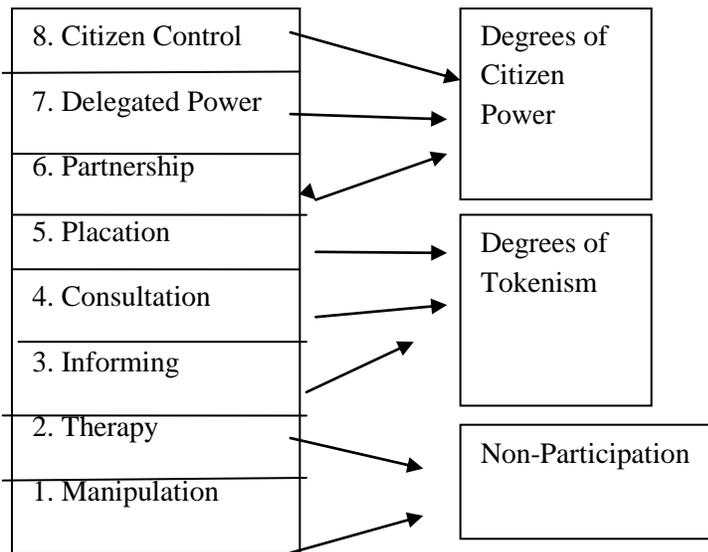
This model or theory is the brain child of Sherry, R. Arnstein(1969; 2007) that emphasizes the relevance of citizen undertaking in governance as promoting democracy. The citizen in this study is defined as community. Despite the existence of several literature explaining the citizens' lack of control in determining, governing and improving their social life, the literature falls short of deducing or defining what specific forms of participation can be adopted that will guarantee outcomes(Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007). Therefore literature on citizen participation needs to shift its attention towards understanding "what is citizen participation and what is its relationship to the social imperatives of our time?"(Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007; p.216).

To begin with it is relevant to understand two issues; firstly that "citizen participation is citizen power"(Arnstein,1969;JAIP, 2007, p.216) and secondly "empty rituals versus benefits"(Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007, p.216). In regards to 'citizen participation is power', it must be noted that these two concepts; participation and power have been subjected to the realm of politics while taking the labels of individual(self) help or community involvement(Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007). Some Scholars have as well labeled the ingredient of effective citizen participation as being maximum(absolute) control. However it is crucial to appreciate that attaining maximum control is a task quite challenging to achieve that even Government Heads have met contests from other actors (Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007). To better understand what citizen participation means, Arnstein(1969) defines it as one of the categories of citizen power. Thus once this power is attained then the isolated groups(citizens) who have no control over their social life will in turn be participants in governance of their political, economic and social life(Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007). This citizen power is considered as a methodology through which the "have-nots"(Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007, p.216) work alongside the haves in selecting the manner in which data is distributed, targets are set, vital resources are applied, programs are made to run. In other wards it is the process through which the citizens can establish the required reforms needed that in turn will benefit the society at large(Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007). Applied to UPE in Uganda such reforms per take to the increasing recognition of community involvement in the management of the Schools.

When it comes to the aspect of "empty ritual versus benefit"(Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007, p.216) there is need to appreciate the difference between mere participation and participation where one is in full control of power required to effect the necessary changes(Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007). This connotes the two extreme cases in participation; ineffective versus effective participation based on the extent of power control. The argument here is that participation without adequate empowerment is empty participation since the desired outcomes may not be realized. Thus those who maintain the technologies of power will also maintain the status quo. Arnstein(1969) further highlights that such type of participation has been characteristic of several community based programs. In UPE schools in Uganda, two groups; the SMC and PTA represent the community involvement in School development. However the SMC rather occupy more power than the PTA and as such maintain the status quo as decision makers and implementers of policies in schools. The PTA appear to be empty participants because whatever they propose during the annual PTA meetings is subject to SMC endorsement. This categorization of empty versus benefit is crucial in critiquing literature that merely specifies the forms of community participation in UPE. Thus I find it applicable in as far as the third research question; what forms of community participation exist in relation to UPE? Besides labeling them as School Management Committees(SMC) and Parent Teacher Associations(PTA), it is relevant to understand the interplay of power relations between the two groups and what impact this will have on their level of participation to the school development.

Similarly, Arnstein(1969) develops a further categorization of "participation versus non-participation"(Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007, p.217) which I find relevant in understanding and broadening the discussion on the 3rd Research Question about community participation forms. A typology is developed containing 8 different participation forms that vary in relation to the exercise of power contained in each to effect outcomes.

**FIGURE 2. A Ladder of Citizen Participation.**



The last 2 forms; manipulation and therapy represent cases of no participation, which as Arnstein(1969) argues is a technique utilized by individuals in higher authority to misguide those in forms 1 and 2 as having genuine participation(Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007, p.217). These two non-participation forms are utilized by the power controllers to disable others from undertaking tasks in the policy setting, plan formulation and program implementation(Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007). This discussion is crucial in providing indicators for research questions 5 and 6 wherein the extent to which communities undertake their responsibilities is dependent on which forms they belong. Likewise the communities impact on academic progress will be a passive rather than active one. Therefore cases where the PTA in Ugandan UPE Schools have been undermined in school development may be a result of their inaccessibility to the planning and program implementation platform. However it is relevant to highlight that it is not the SMC that sets these community responsibilities but rather Government through the Education Ministry. Specifically manipulation is typically observed in situations where individuals are appointed to serve as an advisory team or committee. However what these individuals occupying these advisory committees do not know is that they are simply being manipulated by the power holders. The result of this is a further tendency to blindfold these individuals to per take as signatories to any policies enacted. Thus for these 'have-nots' the mere role of signatory is perceived by them as participation. But what these signatories do not realize is that they are signatories to decisions and policies which they have not created or even negotiated upon. Similarly as Arnstein(1969) in JAIP(2007) notes, these so-called advisory committees experience what is termed as a one way

advice flow as opposed to two-way flow wherein the heads of the committees or organizations rather dominate the meetings or panel discussions with the advisors thus leaving no-room for ample clarification and viewpoints from the advisors. Thus with such situations, there can be no genuine participation but rather individuals are manipulated to perceive their actions or roles to be very crucial and yet they remain participants by name rather than participants in action(Arnstein,1969; JAIP, 2007). This means therefore that a section of needs by these passive participants(advisors) will not realize the positive outcomes desired since they are not full participants. In the context of UPE Schools in Uganda, it is common to witness the parents offering a variety of advisory ideas during annual PTA meetings as well as Open-days(discussions on School development projects). They are often regarded as the owners of the School because their children form the basis of the School's existence. To most of the parents this is a relevant activity that they highly value with the perception that their ideas and suggestions on School-development projects will be taken into consideration by the management of the School. However what follows after such meetings has nothing to do with the PTA and thus the parents rather receive are mere recipients of notifications about the already agreed upon programs or policies that the School management have designed and unanimously agreed upon. On a similar note, therapy is viewed by its creators as a necessity in curing individuals from their illiteracy on certain aspects (Arnstein, 1969 in JAIP, 2007). However it must be noted that therapy does not cure the citizens of their problems or hindrances to performance but is rather used as a diversion tactic by authorities (Arnstein, 1969 in JAIP,2007). In the context of UPE Schools, it is quite common to witness parents regularly expressing dissatisfaction about the quality of these Schools where their children attend daily classes. The composition of this dissatisfaction includes inadequate classroom furniture, teacher absenteeism, security, feeding and gaps in information flows from School administration. It should be noted that these aspects hinder the prospect of any quality learning and pupil achievement in class. Nonetheless rather than the parents receiving therapy inform of solutions to the regular dissatisfaction, instead they are made to per take in the PTA so as to divert their mindset away from School vices to supporting School programs through fund contributions. As a result parents keep responding to such calls for funds by the PTA rather than placing continuous attention to the need for actions to be undertaken on the barriers to quality learning.

Participation forms 3 and 4 provide individuals the opportunity to receive tokens in the form of being heard implying that they have a say in issues at stake (Arnstein, 1969 in JAIP, 2007). This is through undertaking in roles as informers or consultants (ibid). Despite this promotion of individuals to informers and consultants, they are still unable to ensure that their voices, ideas and suggestions will be taken into consideration by those in higher authority (ibid). Thus as it is argued, when individuals per take in such participation forms, they are unable to challenge or alter the status quo (Arnstein, 1969; JAIP, 2007). Informing and consultation roles can be seen as occupied by the PTA group wherein PTA meetings are conducted annually in some Schools as well per School term in others. Parents are informed about the welfare and progress if any of their respective children and the School at large. More importantly the parents are consulted by teachers to suggest measures to address the identified obstacles to School progress. Despite their occupation of these consultation roles, there remains no guarantee that these informed suggestions by the parents (consultants) will be enacted as School Policy by the School management. What is of significance nonetheless is that there are separate meetings held by the School Management Committee (SMC) that the PTA bar one representative (Head-Teacher) do not attend. This is what makes the informing practice challenging whereby there is majorly one-dimensional flow of information as opposed to a two-way process. The result of this is that the PTA are mere recipients of already agreed upon programs designed by the SMC. Thus informing and consultation is a necessary undertaking but falls short of control over the policy platform. Placation (form 5) is much similar to the informing and consultation forms with the only difference being the title that the individuals occupy as 'advisers' rather than informers or consultants. Despite their advice, they do not command authority over what aspects to address and not to. Much as the 'have-nots' acquire the leadership in designing solutions and models to address the vices cropping up, they lack the leadership in determining the feasibility of these proposed programs. Thus as Arnstein (1969) in JAIP (2007) argues, this placation level contains a degree of tokenism whereby individuals appear to be rewarded by placing them on the advisory committees of Schools and yet decision making remains a far reached realization for them. The end result of this is a stalemate between designing programs for supporting pupil learning and the eventual implementation if any of these proposed programs.

The highest participation levels (citizen power, delegated power and partnership) offer the prospect of the have-not individuals to gain access to the decision making and planning platform,

something that had eluded them throughout their interaction with others in the pursuit of goals. Partnership is a participation level that provides the have-not groups the environment to cooperate alongside the higher authorities in terms of designing programs for curbing vices, deciding upon which programs to be adopted and implementing the adopted programs. An insight into UPE Schools in Uganda reveals that this shared responsibility can be seen in particular to designing of programs to support quality learning. This is evident in the PTA's regular call upon parental participation in this regard. Nonetheless the decision regarding which programs to be implemented is an arena lacking a shared responsibility. It is from partnership that the elevated individuals earn responsibilities that they have amassed through regular cooperation alongside the power holders. This level is non-evident in community involvement in Ugandan UPE Schools. This is because the responsibilities or roles occupied by the SMC and PTA were not a product of regular undertakings in such roles so as to have them (responsibilities) delegated to each respective community group. Rather these roles were defined and delegated to both communities with the implementation of UPE in 1997. In short the duties to be fulfilled were designed by Government before any self-creation or practice by individuals in UPE Schools. Citizen power is perceived as the eventual highest level of participation through which individuals are able to determine the direction or state in which their Schools should run. In other words communities acquire control their own Schools, what is commonly referred to as 'community Schools'. At this level, responsibilities need no delegation because they are entirely owned by citizens. Observing the education system in Uganda this 'citizen power' is operational in several community owned Schools that are on arise. However it is important to indicate the type of communities that are the owners of these Schools. Communities in this study comprise of School Management Committee and Parent-Teacher Association. On the contrary the communities owning these 'community owned Schools' consist of the entire surrounding environment to the School. This signifies that everybody living that area with a School becomes an owner of the School. Thus there are no such assertions or labels like SMC or PTA in these Schools. Instead the health facilities, security, business centers or markets serve as the community owning the School within the same locality. Thus in the initial situation where the office of decision making and senior-management was the priority of a few, these 3 levels, offer a counter attack by elevating these citizens into active and top participants in social development. What one must note however is that this situation at the UPE Schools in Uganda simply serves as

an ideal model or campaign that can enable the PTA gain similar control as the SMC in the management and progress of these schools. However it is relevant to note that within the SMC-PTA interaction, the PTA have not obtained the access to such participation levels; delegated power, citizen power or partnership. This is not necessarily due to the SMC(occupying these forms of authority) manipulation but rather is a matter of the rules of the game; formal rules, that are set by the Government through the Education Ministry. Thus Arnstein(1969) in JAIP(2007) does not trace such complexities and hidden realities.

#### **2.6.4.1 A Critical Reflection on the Arnstein Ladder: What it misses?**

According to Arnstein(1969) in JAIP(2007), the ladder represents a substitute term for power. Thus the ladder indicates or depicts participation as an arena entailing power confrontations, with the citizens struggling to move up the ladder and in doing access or control the institutions that act as barriers to their ascension to the top. The applicability of this Ladder is attributed to a vast variety of contexts besides the contemporary cities that were Arnstein's focus(ibid). Accordingly this Ladder is recommended for analysis of tertiary institutions such as elementary public or private Schools as well as College and higher University education. These education institutions

This inspiring measurement by the ladder is widely subjected to empirical inquiry in the academia, policy and policy action. for instance in the Academia, it is regularly cited in conferences about participation among stakeholders in business programs(Cummings, 2001), studies on economic growth and development(Hayward et al, 2004), building health strategies(Longley, 2001 in White, 2003), public policy(Yang, 2005 in Bishop & Davis, 2002), urban growth(Blanc & Beaumont, 2005) and child development studies(Hart, 1992 in Shier, 2001).

It must also be noted that despite the wide applicability of the Arnstein Ladder towards discussions on the meanings and forms of participation, the ladder has not escaped a similar level of scrutiny and critical responses.

The first critic focuses on the hierarchical nature displayed by the Ladder, with the citizen control appearing as the sole or ultimate goal of the citizens' participation(Tritter & McCallum, 2006 in Collins et al, 2006). However it must be appreciated that each individual or group engaging in a form of participation has their own goal or aim that cannot be merely generalized

as gaining 'citizen control'(Tritter & McCallum, 2006 in Collins et al, 2006). In the context of community involvement in Primary Schools, the SMC and PTA occupy different but vital responsibilities that are deemed necessary in promoting quality education. Therefore obtaining citizen control should not be falsely generalized as the goal of PTA and SMC participation in School development. To put it better, accessing or controlling citizen power is not necessarily an end in its self but rather a means to achieve the desired goal.

The second critic relates to the responsibilities that are occupied by the individuals, communities as well as senior authorities in the communities (Collins et al, 2006). To Arnstein(1968), these responsibilities occupied are only altered when there are changes in-relation to the power levels inherent within each stage of the Ladder. This assertion nonetheless minimizes the complex instances where the roles or responsibilities among participants is quite unclear or difficult to unearth(ibid). As indicated under the literature section, not all parents are aware of their entire responsibilities defined under the UPE Stakeholder handbook(2008). Similarly the roles or responsibilities of actors, in this case communities may emerge or be labeled after participation has been undertaken rather than before or during the participation process. In other wards this Ladder lacks applicability in situations where responsibilities are amassed overtime by the regular undertaking of individuals in tasks or activities. It must be noted that an outlook on the history of PTAs and SMCs in Uganda as already discussed under section..... indicates that the introduction of SMC and PTA participation owes to the earlier activities undertaken by parents in schools and the school managers in the earlier decades after independence in 1962 where UPE was not near any realization. In short, the current roles occupied by the two community groups owe to the uniform activities undertaken earlier on by parents and administrators of Schools, an idea that Arnstein(1968) refutes.

Another critic arises in the manner in which the Ladder symbolizes itself as merely a model of participation , but does not offer explanation as to how exactly these participation forms can be made effective to achieve the desired outcomes. In other words, the Citizen Ladder does not adequately explain what particular aspects can influence the level of participation that in turn will determine the extent to which outcomes are realized. Power is rather the big picture in determining participation, however beyond power are specific elements that make the difference at the end of the day for who participates and who does not ? These elements are

raised under the World Bank empowerment perspective(2002) and relate to *access to information, inclusion, accountability and local organizational capacity*.

What is commonly cited under community participation literature is the aspect of power and how it enables some community personnel to participate effectively as compared to others. Therefore much as community participation is a recommendation for progress among UPE Schools, it must be corrected that it is not merely participation that produces the desired academic progress but rather *effective participation*. Therefore the important theoretical question in this study is, *how can participation be made effective to effect the desired goals?* In other words, *what mechanisms enhance community involvement to promote academic achievement in Schools?* The Arnstein Ladder nonetheless has provided a model that can be applied in generating answers to the 4th Research question relating to the responsibilities of communities. Accordingly, the SMC and PTA responsibilities may be categorized by Arnstein as either planning, consultation, information gathering or therapy.

The Arnstein ladder this far has addressed roles that may be pursued by both community groups in this study. It therefore accommodative to the model of community practice in this research. More importantly is that the aspect of power is highlighted in relation to its influence on community participation wherein the haves control the tools of real or absolute participation whereas the have-nots are left to make do with non-participation and tokenism. Therefore it can be concluded from this ladder that power is a vital determinant of participation. This means that communities which are empowered will highly undertake their responsibilities effectively and realize the desired outcomes. On the other hand disempowered communities will lack the essential ingredients to enable effective participation in Schools. The Arnstein ladder nonetheless does not develop an empowerment model which can be adopted by communities or citizens. Power is simply labeled in its general sense by the ladder without many specifications. This therefore inspired the search for what ingredients of community empowerment are essential to transform non-participation or low participation into highly effective participation. These ingredients act as the specific determinants that influence the extent of participation by the School Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations. These ingredients are the four empowerment tools initiated by the World Bank(2002). These empowerment mechanisms are not only applied by the World Bank but have served as the conceptual framework on research

covering the effectiveness of School Committees in Tanzania by Masue.O.S(2010). This made it necessary to incorporate the World Bank's(2002) empowerment indicators in this research in an attempt to unlock the constraints to effective community participation by both the SMC and PTA. This is addressed in the next section.

### **2.6.5 Determinants and Challenges of Community Participation in Schools: A review of World Bank Empowerment Indicators.**

This section constitutes the third conceptual framework of this study. More specifically it provides the theoretical knowledge about possible challenges that may be encountered during community involvement in Schools. This section will widely address the concept 'empowerment' more specifically to the four indicators raised by the World Bank. These four indicators are inclusion, information access, accountability and local organizational capacity. The argument here is that these indicators may deduce two scenarios in relation to community participation in Schools. The first is that where each of the empowerment indicators are in place and fully exercised, then communities will fulfill their responsibilities and foster quality learning and performance of pupils in Schools. On the other hand the second scenario arises where communities score lowly in relation to these indicators. As a result of this second scenario, communities may experience challenges in fulfilling their responsibilities. This means that community efforts in combating barriers to quality learning and pupil performance will remain a desired but not achieved goal. It must be re-emphasized that community participation in this study concerns responsibility fulfillment by the School Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations. In other words high fulfillment of responsibilities is analogous to high participation whereas low responsibility fulfillment equates to low participation. Therefore the two phrases; responsibility fulfillment and participation will be used interchangeably in this study.

The relationship between these empowerment indicators and participation is that they(indicators) support the capacity of communities to undertake their responsibilities fully. This means that community participation is more than what Arnstein(1968) and Epstein(1987) suggest. As already stated, communities are given a variety of defined responsibilities which are modeled by the citizen ladder(1968) and the Involvement framework(1987). However participation or responsibility fulfillment requires capacity to be realized. The argument here is that it should not be assumed that a mere formation of community responsibilities is satisfactory. Where there is

no empowerment or capacity building of these communities to perform effectively, then achieving quality learning and School progress will remain an elusive dream for the SMC and PTA in a particular School. In short, empowerment enables community participation to be undertaken effectively and in turn provide support to pupil and teacher welfare in Schools.

In relation to the research questions raised under chapter one, this section accounts for the fifth Research question, that is to say; To what extent do the SMC and PTA fulfill their responsibilities? Accordingly therefore, the World Bank empowerment indicators will aid in accounting for why communities in the two respective Schools(KPS & NPS) vary in their responsibility fulfillment if any and which in turn bears consequences for quality performance of pupils in both schools. Before examining the four empowerment mechanisms, it is essential to first label the meanings attached to empowerment. More importantly is to select the working definition adopted for this study.

### **2.6.5.1 Empowerment Defined**

Just as the concept of community participation has been subjected to numerous interpretations and debates, empowerment both in theory and practice reveals different connotations. These different definitions should not be seen as detrimental to achieving a single working definition, but rather they indicate the diverse contexts in society that call for adoption of different empowerment strategies. Therefore what is empowerment to communities need not be assumed as identical to Organization or institutional empowerment.

Aslop et al(2005, p.1) define empowerment as the means through which individual or group capacity to undertake "purposive" tasks is enabled. This type of definition emanates from the argument that empowerment is a prerequisite for realizing development goals wherein individuals of whatever class or ethnicity make their own choices and determine their own destiny. This means that people control the power or authority over their life experiences. Aslop et al(2005,p.2) further contends that this view on empowerment belongs to the intrinsic and instrumental philosophical approaches. The intrinsic philosophy of empowerment is cited by proponents of decentralization and democratic practices(Dollar & Kraay, 2002; Kaufmann et al, 2004).The instrumental philosophy on the other hand is cited by those who see empowerment as

a measure that supports developmental aspects like poverty reduction and respect for human rights(Aslop et al, 2005).

From this description, it can be noted that empowerment is a "relational concept "(Aslop et al, 2005, p.2) under which the have-nots contest for authority from the haves in order to determine and implement their won purposive choices. More importantly it must be appreciated that since these choices are perceived to be purposive, then the expected outcomes are equally expected to be beneficial to the practitioners. This approach promotes the argument that community empowerment will produce desirable outcomes in Primary Schools since the practitioners(community) are parents, teachers and School managers who are expected to agitate for improved school performance and quality learning.

Empowerment scholars in particular Perkins and Zimmerman(1995) highlight two definitions that are developed from other practitioners or proponents. One such definition is that of the Cornell empowerment group(1989) cited by Perkins and Zimmerman(1995) that sees empowerment as a deliberate gradual process operating in the context of remote communities and entailing mutual understanding, critical observations, concern and collective involvement by which the have-nots are able to access and utilize available resources. On the other hand, Rappaport(1987) in Perkins and Zimmerman(1995) offers a much more generalized view on empowerment as a process through which individuals maximize authority over their lives and practices in the community. In these two approaches by Cornell(1989) and Rappaport(1987), it can be summarized that empowerment is a process or means to achieve an end. This end may constitute the diverse benefits being sought after by individuals or communities. Thus empowerment in this case is equated to a process or means-oriented approach. On the other hand however Perkins and Zimmerman(*op.cit.*) argue that empowerment may also equate to the results-oriented approach or ends as opposed to means. In other words communities may engage in empowering processes or means and in so doing become empowered. Thus empowerment is an end in itself and is therefore not necessarily limited to means-process approach. This idea is shared by Swift and Levin(1987) in Perkins and Zimmerman(1995). Thus it is asserted that an explicit differentiation of empowerment means(processes) and ends(outcomes) is vital for the development of empowerment theory. Thus it can be concluded that empowerment as a concept

experiences the pluralism that characterizes several concepts in Social Science literature. In other words there is not one but rather diverse meanings of empowerment.

All these definitions on empowerment though distinct point to two Schools of thought; processes and outcomes. In short Scholars like Rappaport(1987), Dollar and Kraay(2002),Kaufmann et al(2004) and Aslop et al(2005) focus on empowering processes whereas Swift and Levin(1987) and Perkins and Zimmermann(1995) place attention towards empowerment outcomes or results. Thus it is from these backgrounds that the World Bank in 2002 emerged with an empowerment practice to better education and alleviate poverty among diverse communities.

Accordingly, the World Bank(2002) formulated its approach on empowerment *as a process that enhances individuals' capability to undertake decisions and transform these decisions into the preferred outcomes*. Following this, the Word Bank(2002) emphasized that poor communities needed to have access to "assets and capabilities"(World Bank, 2002, p.1) so as to ensure that low class individuals per take in, negotiate, determine as well as hold accountable the institutions that influence their wellbeing. From these definitions by the World Bank(2002), it can be argued that its approach to empowerment is one that focuses on the process or means, that is to say, strengthening the means to realize desired outcomes. This is clearly labeled in the World Bank's definition previously stated. None the less, the World Bank notes that the results-oriented approach is one area of empowerment that other practitioners identify with. Accordingly, the World Bank(2002, p.1) cites the empowerment perceptions across Indian and Brazilian contexts wherein in the former, women feel empowered when they are given a fair hearing trial in Public Courts. In the latter, both men and women perceive themselves as empowered in situations where they are active participants in budget design and determining which tasks to be allocated to the budget design. In these two cases, empowerment is an end in itself wherein it is an outcome of gaining access to fair trials or budget formulation. The World Bank empowerment perspective however focuses on empowerment as a means, and accordingly it stipulates four indicators that are prerequisites for desired outcomes to be realized. In particular, this approach was initiated to enhance the capacity of local communities in realizing development. In other words, it recommends measures that School Communities in UPE Schools may undertake in their participation to each respective School. These indicators are *inclusion, information access, accountability and local organizational capacity*.

For this research therefore, I adopt the World Bank empowerment definition and its preceding four indicators. This is because the World Bank's 'empowerment' notion was developed to best serve the local communities. As already stated the impact of community participation on academic performance is the objective of this study. It must be appreciated however that empowerment perspectives by Rappaport(1987), Perkins and Zimmerman(1995) do mention 'community empowerment' in their vocabulary. By adopting the World Bank's(*op.cit.*) empowerment model is by no means disregarding the Scholarly contributions by those empowerment theorists already mentioned. Rather I find the World Bank strategy more specific and providing several "observable implications"(King et al, 1994, p.41). Such specificity is seen with the indicators; inclusion, information access, accountability and local organizational capacity. Similarly these aspects reflect observable implications from which measurements can be made for instance how much information if any is accessed by the PTA in one school or the SMC in another school? On the contrary, theorists such as Zimmerman(1995) and Rappaport(1987) do not indicate any specifications of empowering indicators apart from developing abstract terminologies such as assets and capabilities. The relevant question then would be what constitutes these assets and capabilities? Could it be information, accountability, organizational capacity or inclusion? In short, specifications are lacking in the empowerment literature by theorists such as Rappaport(1987) and Perkins & Zimmerman(1995). This provided the background in selecting the four empowerment indicators as more appropriate in explaining the ingredients for community participation to be effective. To begin with is a discussion on inclusion, followed by information accessibility, accountability and lastly local organizational capacity.

**Inclusion** is seen as a mechanism by which remote or disadvantaged communities participate effectively in the development of their aspects like education, health and infrastructure. In other words, local communities are treated as co-planners of their own development by exercising control and power over the policies designed and implemented(World Bank,2002). This can be seen within the Ugandan Primary education system where communities in the form of School committees and parent-teacher associations are mandated to per take responsibility in the management and development of their respective Schools.

The World Bank(2002) further contends that the challenge arising in the inclusion process concerns one of sustainability wherein no follow-up if any is made to ascertain whether all relevant individuals are actively consulted or exposed to the policy making, resource allocation and planning. Accordingly, challenges to sustainability in Uganda's UPE program can be traced where the parents in the PTA are sidelined from participating in School planning and policy making platforms. The PTA is a relevant community just as the School Committees and therefore should have representatives on the committee or planning board. As a result of this, reforms in Uganda's Primary education have been made to establish a PTA executive that would represent the entire parental body on the management stage in each respective School. However not all UPE schools have implemented these reforms. In short, it is vital to expose all relevant community personnel to decision making, planning and resource allocation since all personnel are perceived as actors with preferences, in this case, the school progress.

It must be observed though that whereas the World Bank develops the notion 'inclusion', this may be perceived by others as 'participation'. This is because participation just like inclusion involves a process by which disadvantaged, low class or remote communities gain access to planning and management platforms. However the inclusion strategy under the World Bank emphasizes the need for equality in accessibility wherein resource allocation and planning routines should be exercised by community members whether or not reputable. Thus School management and resource allocation need not be singlehandedly dominated by the SMC but rather interventions in expanding this platform to include teachers and parents should be undertaken. The reason behind this is disclosed under the widely held belief in education, that *where parents are involved, the School is likely to witness progress since the parents want the best education and welfare experience for their children(students)*(World Bank,2002).

**Information access** is considered a vital empowering mechanism for communities since "information is considered as power"(World Bank, 2002, p.2). Accordingly, it is recommended that there be a two-way information flow between central authorities and local communities. The composition of information in this study relates to *community responsibility orientation, calls for community meetings, supply of minutes of meetings, transfer of funds, planning and budgetary allocations*. The relevance of this information access is that local communities are able to gain knowledge on each of the specified aspects above, most notably *community responsibilities* to be

fulfilled by other communities. Knowledge of these responsibilities ensures that individuals in a particular community maximize their authority in demanding for accountability from another community. This will in turn drive communities to fulfill their responsibilities, since defaulting by whatever standard will be witnessed by members of another community. On the contrary, in situations where community responsibilities are made secret or hidden, then the manipulation of these responsibilities by certain community members is a likely occurrence. This in turn may hinder the fulfillment of duties by one community since its members have no knowledge of their duties.

In my opinion, information access may experience two challenging situations in regards to community participation in Schools. These challenges can be witnessed at a macro and micro level. At the macro level concerns the tendency of one community deviating from its expected roles and in so doing undermining the productivity of another community dependent on the former. This is possible in situations where certain community members are not fully knowledgeable on the responsibilities of other community members besides their own for instance PTA knowledge of SMC responsibilities. Of significance is that the School management by virtue of its authority may manipulate school-related funds to suit managerial interests as a committee whilst paying no heed to PTA demands for funding PTA programs. However in case the PTA are not aware that they deserve a defined percentage of allocated funds to Schools, then they (PTA) may not make demands for these funds which in turn offers the SMC the platform for misappropriation of these funds for personal gains. In short under the macro perspective, one community group may monopolize the resource allocation and decision making as to which programs are to be implemented and funded. At the micro level, a single community group whether SMC or PTA may experience dominance and manipulation internally. These challenges may be driven by egoistic ideas of certain individuals especially authorities of a single community group for instance PTA executives or SMC chairpersons. As a result, certain individual(s) most notably community chairpersons may make personal certain information that belongs to all members of a particular group. As a result of withholding information on available resources and funds, community activities as a whole experience stagnation and this undermines the realization of school progress.

**Accountability** is viewed by the World Bank as a mechanism through which community staff, private organizations or "service providers"(World, Bank, 2002, p.4) are inspected in terms of policies, programs and practices undertaken. Accountability is best utilized in situations where formalized programs and supporting funds are made transparent to the public. This ensures that individuals charged with program coordination are inspected upon with due knowledge of the satisfactory policy standards. Accountability in Universal Primary Education may take the form of community to public and community to community accounting(*ibid*). Accordingly, school communities such as the PTA and SMC may be held accountable for their actions by the entire public citizenry surrounding a particular School though not members to the PTA or SMC. On the other hand, activities by a particular school community such as SMC may be inspected upon by another community, in this case parents and teachers(PTA) or vice versa.

In addition, the World Bank(2002) stipulates the relevance of information in maximizing the prospects of accountability. Accordingly when local communities are sensitized on their rights to demand for accountability from their authorities, these authorities in turn will work towards achieving the expected outcomes since their approaches or activities may be questioned and examined by local community personnel(*ibid*). Under the UPE program in Uganda, information access builds more pressure upon each respective community group(SMC or PTA) to undertake its responsibilities in the correct manner deemed essential to School development. Accessibility to laws is agitated for as a means by which the rights of communities are insured so as to limit exploitation or dominance of local community personnel by authorities(World Bank, 2002).

**Local Organizational capacity** concerns the ability of individuals or groups to perform organized activities collectively while utilizing available resources to solve issues of every day concern(World Bank,2002). In other words, actions and resources constitute the basis for organizational capacity. This practice is normally aligned to formal systems. However as the World Bank notes, this practice has taken on informal dimensions most notably among the disadvantaged or poor communities and individuals in society(*ibid*). Accordingly, the World Bank asserts that communities which are better organized will have their opinions heard and their needs addressed(*ibid*).

Despite the existence of local organized practices, the World Bank(2002) argues that organization is not the only prerequisite for meeting demands, however there is need for

networking. This is because in as much as poor communities may have organized mechanisms that are effective in realizing their demands, they lack the capacity in resource and technical knowhow(*ibid*). These poor communities may nonetheless network with agencies or organizations that provide the resource and technical support. More importantly, *ibid* recommends that its only when communities network with each other that they will form large scale agencies that are able to mobilize Government support through funding and resource provision.

The challenge arising in this activity concerns constructing an organized platform that all community actors identify with and support(World Bank,2002). It should not be assumed that all community members functioning in a recently implemented organizational structure offered support for such reforms(*ibid*). In other words, obtaining a uniform agreement as to what framework to pursue is hardly realized among community members. This raises a relevant question as to how the different opinions or perceptions of community personnel are meshed up together to obtain a single agreement? In relation to school progress in Uganda the central issue is determining which community group performs the leading role in initiating an organized structure for all communities to undertake. Is it the PTA or School management? No matter what the answers reveal, it is most likely that one group for instance PTA may be exploited in this activity. This is because establishing an organizational structure is effected by planning, which as the Education Act(2008) reveals is a matter of the School management committee and not PTA. Thus democratic principles of representativeness and transparency are likely to be undermined in the pursuit of these practices. This is because the Parent-Teacher Associations may end up as subjects of plans and implemented programs that they did not determine or formulate. To limit this would require Government initiation of plans that are uniformly implemented in all UPE Schools. In as much Government-led programs would undermine community-led participation, it nonetheless limits contests or conflicts among communities(SMC or PTA) that are a hindrance to achieving School development. This is because community-led participation may experience several periods of time spent on negotiation and agreement among communities on which rather than devising strategies to improve School progress and support quality learning.

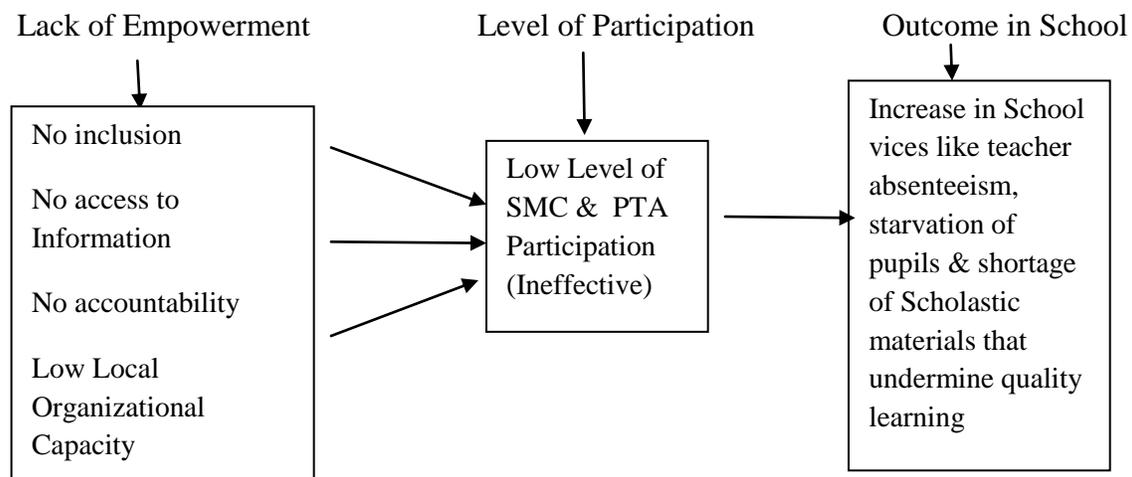
In short, local organizational capacity is a prerequisite for effective community participation. What matters is the ability of communities to operate under organized platforms. Nonetheless

attention needs to be paid to the source of such platforms, with Government-led policies most suitable for designing and implementing organizational structures that are uniform in all UPE Schools.

Therefore each of the four empowerment channels initiated by the World Bank(2002) necessitate implementation in UPE contexts in order to maximize high or at least moderate community participation. More importantly as initially stated, these indicators reflect the challenges or hindrances encountered by communities; information inaccessibility, accountability, exclusion and disentangled or fragmented activities. Therefore without redressing these challenges, school performance and development will remain a goal out of reach by the school management and parent-teacher association. Thus I create two scenarios as figures 3 and 4 reveal that may be realized in UPE Schools. These scenarios intend to reflect the relationship and relevance of empowerment towards participation and pupil performance. Accordingly, the different degrees of community empowerment determine the levels of community participation which in turn will either foster or undermine pupil achievement.

### FIGURE 3. Empowerment Evaluation.

Scenario 1: lack of empowerment mechanisms(Authors own creation)

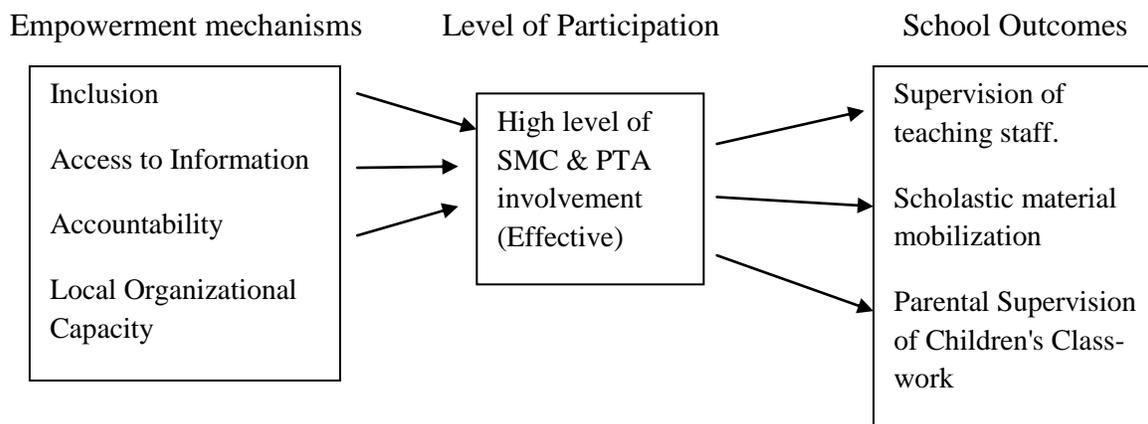


The above scene reflects that in cases where empowerment is non-existent among the school communities, the activities or decisions undertaken by these communities (SMC or PTA) will score below moderate levels. The low participation provided by SMC and PTA will simply

encourage rather than deter barriers to quality learning for instance teacher absenteeism and shortage of scholastic materials. The argument here is that community participation is a process to realize an end, in this case school performance. However it is also relevant to highlight that community participation as a means is also dependent on other processes which in this case are the empowerment indicators induced by the World Bank(2002). Therefore when these indicators are absent, participation will still be undertaken but with no assurance of responsibility fulfillment by either community.

#### Figure 4. Empowerment in place.

Scenario 2: Adoption of empowerment mechanisms(Authors own creation)



This second scene reflects the gains that may be realized when empowerment is induced among the school communities. As a result of information accessibility, school communities are well oriented as to their responsibilities towards school progress. In the process of undertaking responsibilities, the SMC and PTA redress the everyday vices or barriers cropping up among UPE schools. Similarly when accountability is effected through information access, the SMC will work towards satisfying their expectations with the awareness that the PTA will demand for accountability. This in turn will minimize situations of embezzling school resources and funds for personal gains. Similarly parents who have been oriented on their full responsibilities as defined under the Education Act(2008) will pursue active supervision and concern for their

children's daily class-work and progress if any. In other words the tendencies of attributing pupil education to be the role of only teachers is minimized, since the parents are entitled to assume active inspection of their children's learning experiences. In addition, with better organized mechanisms, the SMC and PTA communities will mobilize funds or resources faster and will equally maintain records that can be consulted for future clarification or accountability. When resources are mobilized on a timely basis, then the barriers to quality learning and pupil performance will be minimized immediately before they develop into crises within schools. Once these barriers reach a crisis level, then it would require a whole concerted effort including Government support and NGO funding to redress the crisis.

The final part of this chapter reveals the variables of this study that were deduced from the conceptual frameworks and literature review.

## **2.7 Variables Defined**

The dependent variable of the study was *Academic performance*. The independent variables were derived from the different perspectives of community participation in education, and accordingly these were *School management*, *Parental involvement*, *Pedagogy* as well as one major factor that tends to influence parental participation; *socio-economic status*. These independent variables were selected because they capture activities of the SMC, parent and teacher responsibilities which all bear an impact on class achievement.

In relation to the dependent variable(*academic performance*), I adopted two mechanisms of measurement. In Uganda, as already noted, the Primary education system constitutes seven classroom-levels(P.1,P.2,P.3,P.4.P.5,P.6andP.7). Therefore academic performance was determined in two ways. The first measurement strategy applied to pupils attending Primary, one(P.1), two(P.2), three(P.3), four(P.4), five(P.5) and six(P.6). As such, the promotion, repetition and dropout levels among pupils attending Primary one, two, three, four, five and six were measured. Progression reflects a pupil's ability to obtain grades above average in assessments in order to be promoted to a higher class. Repetition occurs where pupils are unable to be promoted to a higher class as a result of obtaining grades below the average level. In most Primary schools whether UPE or private, the average grade for each curriculum subject is considered as 40percent. Dropouts are cases where pupils attending a particular school

eventually seize attendance to that school without any notice for their withdrawal. In addition, such pupils decline to pursue education in other schools. Thus they are out of school hence the label 'School dropouts'. The second measurement strategy for academic performance applies to the pupils attending Primary Seven class. As earlier noted, pupils in Primary Seven class annually sit for national examinations known as *Primary Leaving Examinations(PLE)*. Important to note is that Primary Leaving Examinations in Uganda are sat for by only P.7 pupils since this is recognized as the highest level in Primary education, beyond which is a realization of Secondary education. The time period for PLE is usually at the beginning of November annually and these exams are undertaken in only two days countrywide.

It must be noted that the results of the Primary Leaving Examinations(PLE) are recorded annually in December. In turn the results of these examinations are released annually in January and constitute the standard measure by which the Education Ministry in Uganda groups pupils based on their scores in the examinations. In short, the PLE measurement of pupil performance is not my own creation but the standard mechanism formalized by the GoU for determining academic achievement in relation to Primary seven pupils in Uganda. Adopting such a strategy will promote the prospects of reliability in this study which will be discussed in chapter three.

Similarly, the practice of progression and repetition as a measurement for pupil performance was utilized by previous research on Uganda's Primary education. One such research was by the IOB Impact evaluation on UPE countrywide in Uganda between 2000 to 2005. Therefore applying this strategy in the field as a measurement of performance bared prospects for reliability. This is revealed by the following table. P.1 represents Primary one class, P.2(Primary two class), P.3(Primary three class), P.4(Primary four class), P.5(Primary five class), P.6(Primary six class) and P.7(Primary seven class)

**Table 5.: Performance of Pupils in Ugandan UPE Schools**

Class	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
P.1-P.2					
Progression	64%	64%	59%	55%	56%
Repetition	12%	14%	16%	15%	14%
Drop Outs	24%	22%	25%	30%	30%
P.2-P.3					
Progression	88%	90%	85%	80%	85%
Repetition	9%	10%	12%	12%	12%
Drop Outs	3%	0	3%	8%	3%
P.3-P.4					
Progression	83%	85%	82%	77%	77%
Repetition	9%	11%	13%	13%	13%
Drop Outs	8%	4%	5%	10%	10%
P.4-P.5					
Progression	80%	81%	78%	73%	75%
Repetition	9%	11%	13%	13%	13%
Drop Outs	11%	8%	9%	14%	12%
P.5-P.6					
Progression	79%	76%	73%	67%	70%

Repetition	9%	11%	14%	13%	14%
Drop Outs	12%	13%	13%	20%	16%
P.6-P.7					
Progression	69%	67%	62%	56%	57%
Repetition	10%	11%	14%	14%	15%
Drop Outs	21%	22%	24%	30%	28%

(IOB Impact Evaluation, 2008, p.92)

It can be concluded from the table above that the junior class levels (P.1, P.2,P.3 and P.4) experience higher percentage of promoted students as compared to senior classes(P.5, P.6 and P.7). Secondly, the level of repeaters is evenly distributed among all class transitions. Thirdly, the level of pupil dropouts are significantly highest in senior class-transitions(P.5 to P.6 and P.6 to P.7).

The promotion, repetition and dropout percentages were observed in relation to class transitions. Teachers of a particular School formulate assessments for their pupils in all class levels. Pass marks are usually stated most notably 40 percent for all subjects examined. Accordingly it is expected that pupils will progress to the preceding higher class for instance a pupil in Primary one(P.1) class will be promoted to the Primary two(P.2) class. Whether this is a mere idealist notion simply serves to indicate the emphasis on attaining pupil progress in Primary Schools. On the contrary though this is not the reality as some pupils' performance warrant repeating class whereas others simply do not return to the School and take on home duties or early marriages. Concerning the pupils in Primary seven classes, emphasis is placed on passing national examinations(PLC) so as to attain Secondary education. Once again the idealist notion emerges wherein pupils in Primary seven(P.7) class countrywide are expected to pass the PLC examinations and advance into Secondary Schools. In reality this prospect remains elusive because there are large percentages of pupils who annually fail each of the subjects examined under the Primary Leaving Exams(PLC); English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies).

Such pupils may hardly realize Secondary education unless they repeat Primary seven class and obtain satisfactory grades at Primary Leaving Examinations.

### **2.7.1 School Management**

There exist three forms of School management that are analogous to School success; administrative authority over instruction, policy making in relation to School performance standards and effective supervision of School instructional policies (Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51).

More recently across the Scholarly world has been a growing scope on the aspect of *which school facilities are prerequisite for academic progress*. As a result, initial discussions incorporated identifiable quantitative variables, *in particular teacher versus pupil ratio, time span of teachers' experience and time span of pupils exposure to learning* (Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51). These are termed as "status variables" (Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51, p.211). However the research community has shifted its attention towards the relevance of broader variables in form of *"leadership in School administration, coordination of all School programs and administrator-teacher-student relations"* (Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51, p.211). These are labeled as "process-variables" (Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51, p.211). What is of importance to appreciate is that the "status variables unlike the process variables are accessible easily and allow for manipulation. The "process-variables" nonetheless provide the sketch-map for assessing Schools' productivity or level of "effectiveness" (Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51, p.211). From the domain of process variables emerges the School management premise. Just as each UPE School in Uganda is required to have a School management committee (SMC), it emerged crucial to adopt the 'process variables'. This is because the 3 key stakeholders in promoting School development are management (administration), teachers responsibility and parental involvement. To examine the relevance of management towards School performance requires the adoption of the 3 process variables discussed above. Teacher responsibility on the other hand is examined from the domain of pedagogy which in turn incorporates the 3 status variables previously labeled.

To effectively understand the relevance of management to School academic performance required discussing the SMCs' role in terms of (I) provision of leadership in class instruction, (II)

coordinating School programs and (III) policy making towards pupil progress in School. It must be appreciated that leadership in instruction and coordination of programs have overtime proved crucial in promoting pupil class achievement (Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51). On the other hand the policy making towards pupil progress has met differing stand-points with literature stating both the benefits and hindrances of these policies (Wellisch et al, 1978; SOE,1978,Vol.51). One such policy that operates among most UPE Schools in Uganda is that of 'automatic pupil promotion.

### **The Policy of student progression**

To begin with, research on the *policy of student progression* dates as far back as 1929 in a study conducted by Klene & Branson (1929) in Wellisch et al(1978) in SOE (1978, Vol.51). This research revealed an interesting point; that the performance of pupils that repeated class did not differ largely with those that were automatically promoted (Klene & Branson, 1929 in Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51). In relation to this policy of pupil progression, research reveals different explanations in support of either automatic promotion vis-à-vis repetition. One such research was conducted on Philadelphia elementary Schools in 1973 and accordingly revealed that *the repetition policy was not as relevant as the automatic promotion policy in determining pupil achievement* (Reiter, 1978 in Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51). However another study conducted by the American Council for Basic Education argued that the *automatic pupil promotion was a hindrance to pupil achievement*. This is because relying on such a policy (automatic promotion) obstructed the avenue for pupils to demonstrate their academic potential, which would lead to high esteem levels among students that is an indicator of quality performance (Levine, 1966, p.18-23 in Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51). Thus it was relevant to adopt similar measurements of automatic promotion versus repetition of pupils in assessing the SMC's policy on pupil promotion in Ugandan UPE Schools. This has been already stated as an arena which has received low attention in developing countries as opposed to the developed world.

### **The coordination of School programs**

Previous research has as well adopted the *coordination of School programs* in explaining management roles in basic education (Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51). This

coordination is regarded as necessary for School program implementation (ibid). One study conducted in the Michigan elementary Schools revealed that the high program coordination in schools produced a higher level of pupil achievement in reading tests (Michigan State Department of Education, 1976; Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51). Similarly another study conducted in Los Angeles examining reading achievement among pupils found that the coordination in programming by the School management bore a positive outcome on pupil achievement. This is because the coordination entailed a review and exchange among teachers and management, discussing better ways for effective the teaching (Armor et al, 1976, p.39 in Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51). Thus it was relevant to investigate the same coordination practices of the SMC in UPE Schools within Uganda.

### **Leadership in Class Instruction**

The provision of leadership in class instruction has as well received attention among the education sectors in different states since 1970(Wellisch *op.cit.*). Despite this attention, Kiesling, 1971 asserted that education officials could not clearly spell out or label the qualities of effective or non-effective leadership in Schools(Kiesling, 1971 in Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51). Nonetheless there have emerged studies reflecting a relationship between quality leadership and student exam outcomes. One such study was by Weber, 1971 and it concluded that the quality performance gained by 4 Schools in New York was dependent on the effective leadership in designing instruction programs for the students in each respective inner city School. More importantly is that this leadership was characterized by creativity and explicitness (Weber, 1971 in Wellisch et al, 1978 in SOE, 1978, Vol.51). Another study conducted by the Education Office at New York state on 2 city Schools revealed that the differences in pupil performance was majorly influenced by the different structure of policies, methods of implementing policies and programs designed by the School-administration(Wellisch et al, *op.cit.*). Beyond these two studies, emerged emphasis on the necessity of an effective leadership or administration where in proper leadership in class instructional programs was viewed as the primary factor distinguishing achieving Schools from non-achieving Schools(Michigan State Department of Education, 1976; Ellis, 1975; Trismen et al, 1975; Wellisch et al, 1976; California Department of Education, 1977). It must be appreciated that these different studies combined both case studies and surveys. Nonetheless case studies were more suitable in handling the

"process variables" because of the complexity of these variables where as the survey research suited the data gathering on "status variables" that would enhance correlation analyses. My study as will be pointed out in Chapter 3 relied on the Case study design

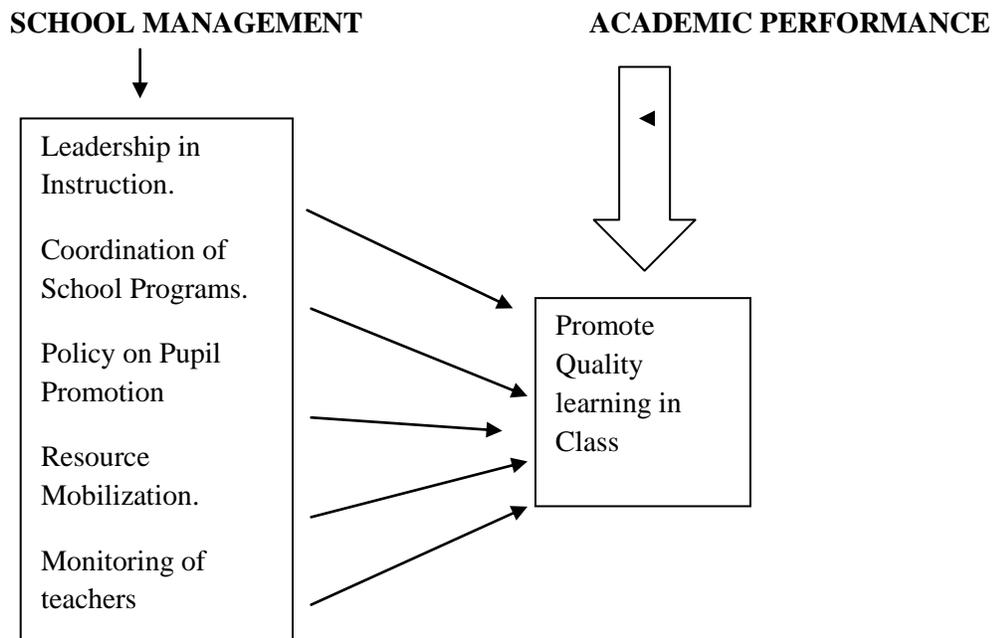
Monitoring of the School staff members is a mechanism of demonstrating leadership over class instruction. Supervision ensures that acts of teacher absenteeism are identified and addressed through Board Meetings. This role is performed by the SMC. Once an ongoing problem like teacher absenteeism has been identified, communication is carried out between the SMC and Head teachers from the affected primary schools. This in turn forms the basis for decision making to be carried out to address the identified problem. The extent to which barriers monitoring and decision making is fulfilled by the SMC will bear consequences for tackling to performance in Primary Schools. These provided an understanding of the communities' responsibilities which is the objective of the fourth and fifth research questions. This in particular to the School committees that unlike PTAs assumes a management role in Schools.

### **The Mobilization of Resources**

Resource mobilization programs are geared towards acquiring funds that can target learning infrastructure. This would enable classroom construction and provision of adequate scholastic materials such as text books. Resource mobilization is a means of empowering schools and communities. This provides answers to the second research question regarding the determinants to school performance wherein schools that are empowered with adequate education facilities perform well as compared to their counterparts that are lacking in school facilities. As already indicated the parents to a large extent do contribute these resources as opposed to the SMC personnel. However it is the SMC Chairperson alongside the SMC Budget Officer who do the mobilization and collection of funds. Thus if this role is undermined by an ineffective SMC then there will be no manpower, foodstuffs, funds and construction materials to support the School construction projects.

### **Summary on School Management Variable**

**Figure 5. Summary on School Management Variable**



In short, it needs to be argued that each of the variables under School management bear influence on the attainment of quality learning in the classroom. If undermined, then the type of classroom learning will be detrimental to pupil achievement.

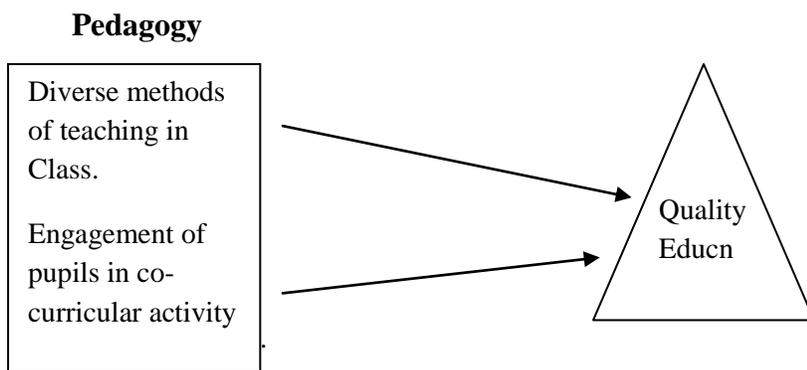
### **2.7.2 Pedagogy**

The role of the teacher is not only to pass curriculum knowledge to students. Equally relevant is that teachers are required to expose the students to "conditions of growth"(Payne, B, 1990). These include work(class lessons) and play(co-curricular)(Payne, B, 1900). As it is often said, 'work without play makes Jack a dull boy'. What is as well vital to note is that pupils react to these conditions differently(Payne, B, 1900). No matter what constitutes these conditions, it is vital to note that the teacher's presence is vital in providing the leadership in enabling students experience these conditions. Therefore it should be noted that the teacher's responsibility to pupils is in selecting the kind of experiences or exposure that the students will have and as well control effectively these experiences to ensure that learning is maximized (Payne, B, 1900). Thus the argument here is that incase these experiences or conditions are in place and are effectively controlled then it will minimize any hindrances to learning in basic education.

It is necessary to admit that the teacher in kindergarten or lower Primary School experiences a challenge which all other teachers of other levels experience. This concerns studying the students and realizing the different needs alongside characters of students and what experiences or conditions to are necessary to enable these needs to be addressed. In short the teacher must plan a conducive environment for the pupils. As Payne (1900) emphasizes "the students act as a laboratory for the teacher"(Payne, B, 1900, p.195) and therefore it is the teacher's responsibility to set the terms and modes of engagement.

Over the years the term 'pedagogy' has grown in meaning to refer to the "art of teaching"(Hall, 1975, p.1). Before this agreeable meaning, the term had received less attention among policy makers and academicians who instead opted for other education-related aspects(Hall, 1975). In other wards pedagogy is recognized by many to refer to the teaching methods employed in Primary School. When it comes to high School or tertiary institutions, pedagogy receives little attention, if any (Hall,1975). During this study, what was of interest was identifying the mechanisms that teachers employ in their day-day interaction with pupils and in turn how these learning aids foster pupil performance. Literature reveals that when pedagogy is in place, student abilities are maximized and performance will be improved. This created the need to apply this variable while examining the 2 respective schools. More importantly, this variable applied to the teacher responsibilities.

**Figure 6. Impact of Pedagogy on pupil learning**



(Author's creation)

In short therefore, it is important that primary education systems effect professional pedagogical practices to be in operation so as to promote the learning experience of pupils.

### **2.7.3 Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement ensures that matters relating to Pupil wellbeing are discussed during Parent-Teacher Associations. Discussions entail effective and regular communication between Parents and Teachers on ways to promote quality learning for the pupils. PTAs in Uganda are held at Schools on a term basis for the different classes (Munene, 2009). This enabled a discussion of PTA responsibilities. Depending on the regularity of such meetings, the extent of PTA responsibilities was determined which applies to the fifth research questions.

### **2.7.4 Relationship of Parental Involvement to Student Academic Performance**

Several education programs worldwide have begun to value the importance of parental participation in School development and pupil's class work as an integral element to promote pupil performance (Griffith; JER,1996). The recognition and call for parental participation is based on its perceived positive outcomes (Griffith; JER,1996). Similarly Corner & Haynes (1991) discovered the relevance of parental involvement in pupil learning as promoting "effective teaching and learning" (Corner & Haynes,1991; Griffith; JER,1996, p.33). Accordingly Corner & Haynes (1991) locate three specific means by which School institutions may enable and promote parental involvement. These are (I) parental participation in School events, (II) parental participation in children's class work and (III) participation in Parent-Teacher Associations.

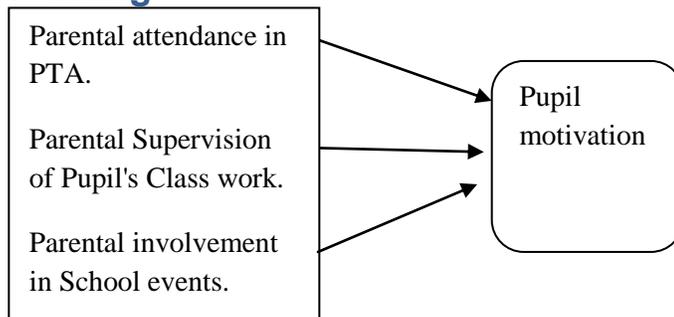
Interesting related studies have been carried out based on perceptions of parents, teachers and pupils towards the impact of parental involvement on pupil performance. This study nonetheless was not aimed at measuring the perceptions of the communities towards school performance, but found these earlier works informative in highlighting the vitality of parental involvement in promoting School performance. One such study was by Reynolds (1992) who compared data on parent-teacher-pupil perceptions. Accordingly perceptions by teachers were found to have high correlations with pupil performance. Parent and pupil perceptions on the other hand registered low correlations with pupil performance. Previous studies by Stevenson & Baker (1987) observed that parents with high educational qualifications registered higher degrees of participation as compared to those with low education attainment (Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Griffith; JER, 1996). Similarly Fehrmann et al (1989) observed that participation by parents in

School work enabled pupils obtain better performance by having few hours spent for Television, with several hours dedicated to Home work (Fehrmann et al, 1989 in Griffith, 1996; JER, 1996). However despite this positive correlations between parental involvement and student performance, Dwyer & Hecht (1992) emphasize that parental support in pupils' academics can be "inversely related or unrelated" (Dwyer & Hecht, 1992 in Griffith, 1996 in JER, 1996, p.34). One aspect of this un relatedness can be viewed in the sense that certain parents may shun from participation in School development programs because their children(pupils) are performing well, hence no need to per take in PTAs (Dwyer & Hecht, 1992 in Griffith, 1996 in JER, 1996). Similarly, other parents may not participate because they view School development and pupil performance as a concern for the School administration and teaching staff (Dwyer & Hecht, 1992 in Griffith, 1996 in JER, 1996). White et al (1992) conclude that parental participation in early intervention strategies did not automatically promote the academic performance of the School. In other wards as Reynolds (1992) emphasizes, despite parental involvement's perceived influence on School performance, it should not be completely drawn or deduced that involvement results into academic achievement (Reynolds, 1992 in Griffith, 1996 in JER, 1996). Within the domain of parental involvement is the assertion that participation is more vital "young (elementary or primary) students as compared to the middle class and high School students" (Walberg, 1981 in Reynolds et al, 1992 in Griffith, 1996 in JER 1996, p.35)

It must be appreciated that although some of the previous research mentioned created the assertion that 'parental participation in School activities promotes pupil achievement', there are certain shortcomings. As Griffith (1996) notes, the limitation that it encounters is in its analysis where parental involvement was determined by teacher and pupil perceptions without paying attention to the respondents' "organizational identity" (Griffith, 1996 in JER, 1996,p.35). In other wards the previous research neglects the analysis of classroom infrastructure, scholastic materials, socio-economic status of parents to cite a few. These variables are crucial because relying single-handedly on data gained from parent-teacher-pupil perceptions, does not account for the context of each respondent and what impact it may bear on the prospects of pupil achievement. One such attempt to include the contextual aspect of respondents (teachers, parents & pupils) was by Ostroff (1992) who urged for the necessity of statistics on "organizational units" (Ostroff, 1992 in Griffith, 1996 in JER, 1996, p.35) such as classroom numbers and School environment features. Further characteristics within a School such as teacher and pupil

numbers vis-à-vis teacher-pupil ratios as well have an impact on the quality of education and prospect of conducive learning (Ostroff, 1992 in Griffith, 1996 in JER, 1996).

**Figure 7. Summary on the Impact of Parental Involvement in Child learning**

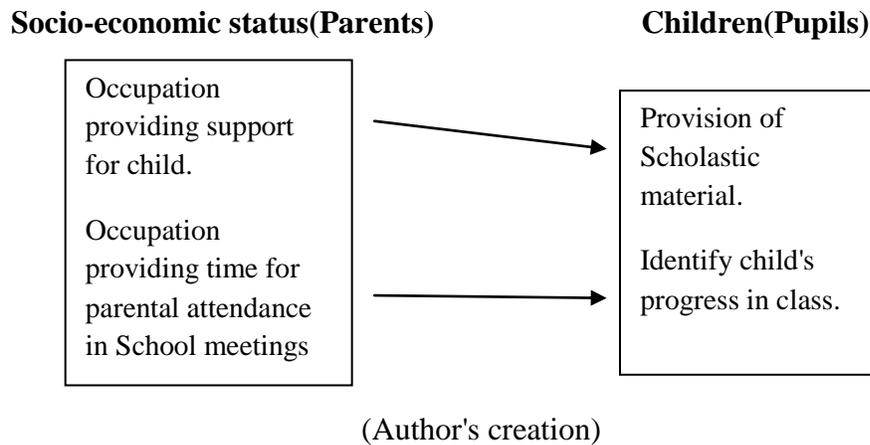


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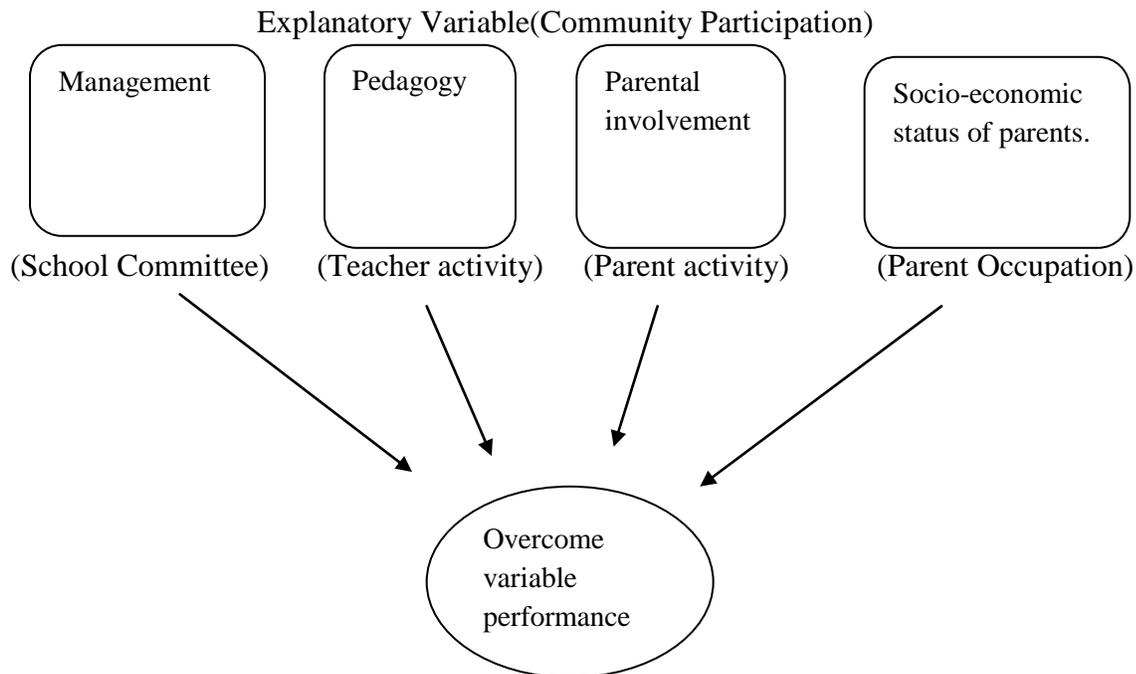
#### **2.7.4 Socio-economic status of parents and pupils**

Socio-economic status of the pupils' parents/guardians is another crucial determinant of Academic performance. The idea behind socio-economic status as a performance determinant is the view that "school variables" (Heyneman, 1976; Sociology of education, 1976, p.200) influence to a small degree the varying levels of academic performance. This according to Heyneman (1976) whether by school facilities or teacher presence and morale does not equate to the pupils' well being that is linked to their socio-economic status. Literature reveals that pupils from low level socio-economic statuses on average perform poorly in school related assessments (Heyneman; Sociology of education, 1976). Socio-economic status of pupils entails an identification of the "parents' occupations" (Heyneman; Sociology of education, 1976, p.201). Under most UPE schools in Uganda, it is quite common to discover the parental occupation composition as consisting of fishing, animal husbandry and welding/machine repairers (Munene, 2009). The impact of this socio-economic status on academic performance is summed up in what parents define as "being unable to fully support their children with scholastic material due to their informal like jobs"(Heyneman; Sociology of education, 1976, p.201). Thus pupils attend UPE Schools without the necessary basic facilities for classroom instruction.

**Figure 8. Summary on the Relationship between socio-economic status and pupil learning**



**Figure 9. Summary on Explanatory Variable versus Dependent Variable**



It must also be noted that within each of these four explanatory variables, there are certain challenges that may be encountered. As the empowerment framework revealed, these challenges relate to inclusion of personnel, access to information, accountability and organizational capacity. Depending on the socio-economic status, the capacity to effect organized PTAs may be

undermined. Similarly the organizational capacity of School management determines their effectiveness in undertaking responsibilities, meaning that management is dependent on organization. Information inaccessibility as already stated may be commonly encountered during parental involvement. Similarly accountability over School management may be out of reach to parents. School management as well tends to be restrictive in terms of its membership, meaning that the potential for inclusion of new members may be undermined. In regards to pedagogy, the challenge may relate to both inclusion and information access. Concerning inclusion, teachers in respective Schools may not be consulted on what pedagogical methods to initiate but are simply instructed to undertake practices defined by management. In relation to information access, pedagogy in Schools may be limited in case teachers are not regularly trained in workshops on the essential *Classroom-teaching* methods that are evolving. This means that teachers will lack adequate knowledge concerning *class-instruction* strategies that are considered effective.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY APPLIED

#### 3.0 Introduction

This is the relevant section of my research where the research questions and theoretical implications raised were in turn transformed into feasible research programs and in so doing providing answers to these questions.

#### 3.1 Research Strategy

A valuable element of my study concerns measurement of school performance levels and community participation levels as stipulated under the research questions. Therefore the application of research methods to my study enabled me in realizing these objectives through a selection of appropriate design, methodology, data source instruments and analysis framework.

In the application of research methods to a study, the focus is rather on whether a strategy is "appropriate"(Saunders et al,2000,p.92) to a particular study. The empirical study aimed at obtaining an elaborate meaning as to how communities through participation can impact on academic performance in the everyday experience of a Primary school environment. Primarily the attention of communities was placed on School Management committees and Parent-Teacher Associations. However other personnel such as those occupying administrative positions in Districts in particular CAOs, DEOs and Local Government authorities were subjected to data collection and analysis.

From the above overview arises a question as to which strategy seemed appropriate on a study seeking to understand the manner in which different community stakeholders' impact on school performance? I adopted the Case study (Yin, 2003) as the strategy to implement this study. Before discussing the rationale behind employing the Case study design, i prefer to first expose the other alternative strategies that though productive were not suitable for this research. Yin (2009) identifies a variety of research strategies such as experimental, historical and survey(Yin, 2009). Historical strategy does not necessarily apply to my research because of its tendency to focus upon pre-modern events (Yin, 2009). Community participation in Primary education is a

contemporary event that has dominated the advent of UPE in the last decade (Munene, 2009). Survey research appeared inadequate in handling data from a variety of UPE stakeholders while at the same time providing data on School performance levels and barriers. This is because it employs data channels such as postal mails and emails (Yin,2009) with subjects that in this case are limited in providing all the relevant information. Experimental study would appear appropriate since it maximizes construction of causal linkages (Yin, 2009). These linkages are essential in explaining the impact of communities on quality education in schools. However where experimental design falls short of its application in my study is due to its preference in treating phenomenon as unattached to the context (Yin, 2009). The preference in this inquiry is in examining community involvement from the context of two Primary schools.

Yin(2003) stipulates the characteristics of a case study as enabling an investigation of "contemporary phenomena in real-life context and more so when the boundaries between phenomenon are not clearly evident"(Yin,2003,p.13). As already mentioned, community involvement was measured in the settings of Kangulumira C/U Primary school and Nakakandwa R/C Primary school located in Kayunga District. As a result of contextualizing community responsibilities to the two schools, emerged a thin boundary line between participation as a phenomenon and School as a context.

Of great relevance in this study is the need to reflect or compare ideas under the literature-theoretical review with the data collected. Saunders et al(2000) offer support to the case study as an a design that would enable this realization. This can be viewed in Saunders et al's(2000) assertion that" we would argue that case study can be very worthwhile in exploring existing theory and provide a source of new hypotheses"(Saunders et al,2000,p.92). The results of this study may not create new theory but nonetheless the output will provide a reflection on existing theory inherent within literature on Community participation in education.

### **3.2 Case Study Determination**

In qualitative research, there is a central question always raised by researchers using Case Study design. The question is What is this study a case about?(Ragin, 1992). The implication of this question is that different researchers have conceptualized cases with different models or view points as to what a case can be. Such views are evident in treating cases as 1) Specific wherein

cases are "found and made"(Vaughan, 1986; Harper, 1987; Ragin, 1992, p.9) on one hand while to others cases are general wherein they are objects or conventions (Platt, 1984; Wieviorka, 1988; Ragin, 1992). More importantly however is that cases have been defined as "empirical units" (Ragin, 1992, p.9) on one hand or "theoretical constructs" (Ragin, 1992, p.9) on the other hand.

Despite these different conceptualizations, defining cases as "empirical units"(Ragin, 1992, p.9) in my opinion risks the tendency to misrepresent cases as unit of analysis. Therefore adopting such an approach in my research would leave a thin line while defining the case and unit of analysis. Thus according to this approach, the case in my research would appear as the two Primary Schools, KPS and NPS. However as will be discussed later, these two Schools rather fit as the unit of analyses in my study. I particularly find applicability in defining the case in my research as a "theoretical construct"(Ragin, 1992, p.9). In other wards cases are deduced or made from theoretical literature on a particular concept. Accordingly therefore, community participation is a dominant paradigm in explaining intervention strategies in UPE worldwide. Important to note is that in developing countries like Uganda a community comprises of relevant actors such as District officials, Local authorities, Health personnel, NGOs as well as the Police and other Security personnel(private security firms). It must be appreciated that all these actors perform crucial but different roles in promoting Primary School development while at the same time fostering pupil wellbeing. Despite these relevant actors in communities, there exist SMCs and PTAs that spearhead or represent community leaders at respective Primary Schools. Therefore the cases in my study are the School Management Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations from KPS and NPS respectively. These constitute "theoretical constructs"(Ragin, 1992, p.9) because they are deduced from the general concept of community participation.

Yin(2003) develops a variety of case study types that a researcher is tasked with selecting as appropriate dependant on his or her study objective. These include but are not limited to "explanatory, exploratory, descriptive and intrinsic"(Yin,2003; Baxter & Jack; Qualitative Report,2008,p.544-559).In this regard, i focused on the explanatory case study as it enables a construction of causal relationships(Yin,2003) between different community roles and prospects for quality learning in Primary schools. This is what Yin(2003) views as relating "implementation with program effects"(Baxter & Jack; Qualitative report,2008,p.544-559). The

logic is that in fulfilling their roles, communities under UPE determine the outcome of quality learning.

### **3.3 Unit of Analysis**

This applied to two UPE Primary Schools located in Kayunga District, Central Uganda. These were Kangulumira C/U Primary School (KPS) and Nakakandwa R/C Primary School (NPS) located in two separate sub counties<sup>1</sup>, Kangulumira and Busaana respectively. Community participation at both Schools applied to School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations. School performance at both Schools applied to pupils from grades 1 to 7.

The selection of Kayunga District stems from the District Local Government report 2012 that indicated the existence of several dysfunctional SMCs and PTAs in UPE Schools under Kayunga. Equally important is that Primary Schools in Kayunga District represent each of the three categories of Primary Schools, 1st Grade, 2nd Grade and 3rd Grade. This categorization is based on academic performance with 1st Grade Schools obtaining high pupil performance regularly. This therefore offered the prospect of examining community participation in different contexts of 1st Grade Schools alongside 3rd Grade Schools. Selecting another District such as Kampala would not have enhanced the prospect of two different contexts based on academic performance. This is because most Primary Schools in Kampala District are labeled as 1st Grade Schools, thus tracing a 3rd Grade School would appear cumbersome. Similarly selecting two Schools with the same performance standards would be inadequate in comparing the outcome of community participation. In addition, this would limit the theoretical analysis of two Schools selected. In other wards are the communities of one School empowered than their counterparts in another School? Secondly, is access to information effective at KPS than at NPS? These analytical questions cannot be enhanced by selecting two Schools with equal performance levels that will most likely have the same level of community involvement. The statistical evidence supporting KPS as a high performing School vis-à-vis NPS as a low performing School are discussed under the Findings and Analysis Chapter..

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<sup>1</sup> A Sub County is a small administrative unit below the County unit in a District

### **3.4 Research Methodology: Qualitative Methodology Applied**

The rationale for selecting qualitative methodology stems from an examination of the "philosophical world views"(Biggam, 2011, p.275) that Mertens(1998) sees as relevant in shaping the type of methodology of a study. These world views can be traced under Orlikowski & Baroudi's(1991) distinction of "positivist, critical and interpretive"(Orlikowski & Baroudi;1991; Biggam,2011,p.275). Accordingly, positivism entails treating reality as separate or non dependant on the researcher, making it appear predictable (Orlikowski&Baroudi, 1991). In relation to my research, determining the impact of community involvement on school performance necessitated a firsthand inquiry in schools. Therefore predictions would not be possible on the onset. In short i do not adopt the positivist style. The critical approach views social reality as having its origins in history and that social-cultural aspects limit the livelihood of individuals hence the need for a researcher to undo these limitations(Orlikowski& Baroudi,1991). It is important to appreciate that these socio-cultural dominance and limitations do exist in modern day society, but the objective of my study is not one aimed at curbing SMC monopolization over PTA, but rather on the ways to maximize responsibilities of both to promote quality pupil training and school performance. I conform to the interpretative approach that emphasizes the need to carry out an empirical study of communities (Orlikowski&Baroudi, 1991) without merely labeling the social reality as already in existence. This results into understanding phenomenon from the community context (Mertens, 1998), that is a focal emphasis of the study. Accordingly therefore Mertens(1998) argues for the adoption of qualitative methodology for a researcher in acceptance with the interpretative philosophical world view.

Qualitative methodology defined the data instruments applied in the field. These were interviews and direct observation primarily in addition to documentary analysis as the secondary evidence. The selection of qualitative methodology and the preceding instruments of evidence was initially done and agreed upon during the spring semester, 2013. The applicability of methodology had to first of all receive authorization from the senior personnel in Kayunga district, which in this case was the CAO's office. This was obtained in a letter dated 12th June, 2013.

### 3.5 Sample Selection

The study consisted of 42 subjects as labeled below:-

- (a) Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Kayunga District
- (b) District Education Officer, Kayunga District
- (c) Inspector of schools, Kayunga District
- (d) Sub-county chief, Kangulumira sub-county
- (e) Sub-county chief, Busaana sub-county
- (f) Local Council III and V, Kangulumira
- (g) Local Council III and V, Busaana
- (h) Head Teacher, Kangulumira Church of Uganda (C/U) Primary school
- (i) Head Teacher, Nakakandwa Roman Catholic (R/C) Primary school
- (j) 5 Teachers, Kangulumira C/U Primary school
- (k) 5 Teachers, Nakakandwa R/C Primary school
- (l) 5 pupils ,Kangulumira C/U Primary school
- (m) 5 pupils, Nakakandwa R/C Primary school
- (n) 5 parents, Kangulumira C/U Primary school
- (o) 5 parents, Nakakandwa R/C Primary school
- (p) Unicef staff-1

Total- 42 Subjects interviewed

### 3.5.1 Strategy for Sample selection

Random sampling applied to parents, teachers and pupils at both schools. In relation to parents, the 5 parents interviewed at Kangulumira C/U PS were accessed at the School's annual Sports day event that occurred on 10th July,2013 and were randomly picked on that day. The composition of the 5 parents at Kangulumira School comprised of 3 males and 2 females. These were subjected to the interview guide questions. At Nakakandwa school the application of random sampling occurred at the School's annual Folk Play ceremony that occurred on the 8th July, 2013. The composition of parents sampled in this school took the form of 3 males and 2 females.

Teachers at both schools were randomly selected on my first visits to each of the 2 schools and this was on 18th June, 2013 with the interviews carried out on 23rd for Kangulumira and 25th June,2013 for Nakakandwa. The 2 schools are 30km apart, however with efficient transport services, this never proved to be a problem. The composition of teachers sampled included 3 females and 2 males for Kangulumira C/U Primary school in relation to 3 males and 2 females from Nakakandwa R/C Primary school. This ensured gender equity in the sample while eliminating any bias towards one group for instance males.

Pupils were initially selected by cluster sampling wherein from both schools, i clustered Primary three (P.3), six and seven classes as the focus from which pupils were selected. This cluster sampling occurred on 27th June, 2013 for KPS and 28th, June,2013 for NPS. I considered P.3 class as representative of P.1 and P.2 pupils most of whom were new in school. P.6 and P.7 pupils represented their upper class counterparts in P.4 and P.5. Thereafter random sampling was applied in selection of one P.3 pupil from each school, two P.6 pupils from each school and two P.7 pupils from each school. This was enabled through accessing the *pupil records file* for P.3, P.6 and P.7 classes respectively. Thus from the P.3 file, I randomly selected one pupil by name. This as well applied to the P.6 and P.7 classes at both Schools. Thereafter these pupils were called upon by the Deputy Head-Teacher at NPS while at KPS this was done by the Head-Teacher. Through this, I was able to have a first-hand interaction with them. At Kangulumira C/U Primary school, the sample comprised of 3males and 2 females whereas Nakakandwa's sample constituted 3 females and 2 males. This selection was made on 26th June,2013 for Kangulumira and 27th June,2013 for Nakakandwa.

### **3.5.2 Other Subjects**

The selection of subjects (a) to (i) and (o) neither employed random nor cluster sampling. Rather these were chosen on the basis of their active role specified in the UPE's Stakeholders Manual. This document was obtained on June 10th, 2013 from a staff of the Education Ministry in Uganda. This was done before the start of interviews and as a result of the initial reading of this document, i was able to identify which actors besides central government play a crucial role in the management and operation of UPE program. This is equally stated in the Education Act of Uganda, 2008 which i obtained on June 1st from the Chairman PTA of Wakiso District in earlier preparation of the field work.

Therefore as stated in the manual and education act, the stakeholders under UPE in Uganda among others include Chief Administrative Officer, District Education Officer, School inspectors, sub-county chiefs, local councils III and V, School management committees, Head teachers, teachers, parents and pupils. This prior knowledge enabled me to crosscheck the responses that were being provided under the question of responsibility or role, as both documents clearly state the responsibilities of each of the stakeholders. This aided in building answers to two research questions concerning community (School committees and Parent Teacher Association) responsibility and the extent to which these responsibilities are fulfilled.

## **3.6 Methodology application in field**

Qualitative methodology defined the data instruments applied in the field. These were interviews and direct observation primarily in addition to documentary analysis as the secondary evidence. The selection of qualitative methodology and the preceding instruments of evidence was initially done and agreed upon during the spring semester, 2013. The applicability of methodology had to first of all receive authorization from the senior personnel in Kayunga district, which in this case was the CAO's office. This was obtained in a letter dated 12th June, 2013.

### **3.6.1 Implementation of Data Instruments**

On application of interviews, 42 subjects were interviewed as indicated in table 6 below:-

**Table 6. Personnel and Time Schedule for Interviews conducted**

Subject	Interview date
Deputy CAO, Kayunga District	17th June,2013
District Education officer, Kayunga	17th June,2013
School Inspector, Kayunga district	17th June,2013
Subcounty chief, Kangulumirasubcounty, Kayunga district	18th June,2013
Subcounty chief, Busaanasubcounty, Kayunga district	18th June,2013
Local Councils III and V, Kangulumirasubcounty, Kayunga district	19th June, 2013
Local Councils III and V, Busaanasubcounty, Kayunga district	19th June,2013
HeadTeacher ,Kangulumira C/U Primary school	20th June,2013
Head Teacher, Nakakandwa R/C primary school	21st June,2013
5 Teachers, Kangulumira C/U PS	23rd June,2013
5 Teachers, Nakakandwa R/C PS	25th June,2013
5 pupils, Kangulumira C/U PS	26th June,2013
5 pupils, Nakakandwa R/C PS	27th June,2013
5 parents, kangulumira C/U PS	29th June,2013

5 parents, Nakakandwa R/C PS	30th June,2013
1 UNICEF staff	16th June,2013
TOTAL=42	

(Source: Author's own creation)

### 3.6.2 Interviews

Interviews enabled the gathering of crucial information from each of the staff listed above, which was crucial in addressing each research question, in addition to maintaining a focus on the two variables. Thus some subjects were better prepared to handle performance related questions whereas others were in position to discuss community (SMC and PTA) related issues.

Administrators in particular UNICEF staff, Deputy CAO, DEO, School inspectors, Sub county chiefs and Local Councils provided relevant information in relation to challenges facing UPE implementation, effectiveness of communities as well as barriers to quality performance. School staff in particular head Teachers and the teachers provided a depth of information on the levels of academic performance, barriers to academic performance, effectiveness of communities like SMC and PTA's, teacher vis-à-vis parental responsibility. Parents availed a depth of responses on teacher effectiveness, assessment of head teacher and suggestions on ways to improve the state of their children schools. Pupils as well offered relevant data towards barriers to academic performance and teacher vis-à-vis parent effectiveness.

### 3.6.3 Direct Observations made

I acquired a dairy to record all observations made during the field visits with specifications on which date the respective observations began and were concluded. Direct Observation was applied to two broad areas; Firstly the two Schools' composition and external environments. These included numbers of teachers, pupils, classrooms and furniture, staffroom, health centers and accessibility to basic services in particular water. In addition to this was an observation on the daily reporting schedule for both pupils and teachers to school to ascertain the degree of

absenteeism. School sanitation, feeding, pupil empowerment in terms of scholastic materials and uniforms utilized the Observation lens. Equally important was an observation on the school's immediate external environment to measure the degree to which it favors or hinders pupil concentration at school in terms of nearby health centers, Security personnel and shops.

Secondly, observation captured the forms of community participation. This was by noting the number of times that the SMC of each School sat down at the School Premises to discuss School related issues as well as the SMC Chairperson's visits to each respective School. Community participation observation was not limited to only the SMC but as well as the PTA. This applied to the number of PTAs held in the period that i was at each School. In addition I was able to record the quantity of parents' attending each School's PTA meeting.

The timescale of these observations was from June 15th to August 2nd 2013.

These observations enabled a proper comparison between both schools.

Therefore I created an Observation Schedule under which certain aspects were to be observed regularly during each visit to the two Schools whereas others were observed once. The aspects observed regularly included:-

- (i) Number of Teachers and Pupils.
- (ii) Number of Parents attending PTA and number of PTA meetings held.
- (iii) Number of SMC meetings held and number of visits made by SMC chair to each School.
- (iv) Levels of daily teacher and pupil attendance
- (v) School facilities

The aspects that were observed once included the external environment features for each School. It must be noted that the logic for regular observation of School facilities was to not only quantify both Schools' facilities but more importantly to identify whether the resources are strained or over-used. This was confirmed by noting each School's facilities at the end of School term 2(study period) on August 13th, 2013 with the earlier statistics of facilities observed on the earlier visits to each school.

### **3.6.4 Documentary Research**

Documentary evidence was crucial in reviewing community responsibilities, formulating relevant questions in the interview from earlier knowledge on these responsibilities and cross checking responses against these responsibilities. Documentary analysis though secondary worked concurrently with interviews and observations.

### **3.6.5 Categories of Documents examined**

(i) Kayunga District Local Government: 2012 Primary Leaving Examinations(PLE) Performance report. This document also indicates the district's PLE performance since 2003. This was obtained on 17th June,2013 at the office of the DEO, Kayunga district.

(ii) School profiles were obtained from each school specifying the school background, location, members of management committees, PTA members, teaching staff as well as foundation bodies, if any. These were obtained from office of the Head teacher at both schools. These were obtained on 20th from Kangulumira C/U PS and 21st June, 2013 for Nakakandwa R/C PS.

(iii) School Management Committee (SMC) meeting minutes were obtained after interviews with sub-county chiefs who are committee members. This was achieved on 18th June. These minutes enabled data on the agenda committee discussions. Do these discussions take into focus academic performance or not? These minutes also indicated measures to be implemented if any to address the problem of mid-day meals. At Nakakandwa R/C, hardly any policy/ measure cited was upheld or implemented. This is contrary to Kangulumira's case where parents performed their duties.

(iv)Parent-Teacher-Association (PTA) meeting minutes similarly enabled an identification of the agenda of these meetings. The data from both schools' minutes indicate differences in the agenda and mechanisms to implement agreed upon policies. Each of the minutes were obtained on 20th and 21st June preceding Head teacher interviews.

(v) The UPE Stakeholders manual is a document most crucial in designing interview questions as well as cross checking responses against the data in the manual. This defines the responsibility of

each official under UPE. Thus it was crucial as earlier stated in reviewing this document first before conducting interviews. This manual was obtained from the Unicef official that i interviewed on 15th June,2013

(vi) The Education Act, 2008, Uganda as well defines the responsibilities of different education personnel, in addition to community groups. However this relevant act was obtained on 20th June by a staff from the Ugandan Education Ministry. Therefore it provided a supplement to the stakeholder manual.

It must be appreciated that applying three methods; interviews, direct observations and documentary research enabled me to consistently cross-check evidence gained from each method. Thus whenever I carried out interviews, I would ensure that I end the day examining certain School documents to ascertain the answers or responses provided to the interview questions earlier on. The direct observations which were regularly recorded provided a check up on the responses from interviews and information contained in the selected documents. This was in particular to statistics on (i)the size of classrooms vis-à-vis pupil accommodation, (ii) level of teacher absenteeism and (iv) entire School facilities. These were issues that all the three data methods examined and

### **3.7 Challenges during field work.**

Teachers' prior information during interviews that parents had very much information to feed me with. It is interesting to note that both Kangulumira C/U Primary School (KPS) and Nakakandwa R/C Primary School (NPS) teachers had this perception and made it known to me during interviews with them. This made me highly expectant or biased of this, however this was not necessarily the case as only seven out of ten parents provided a depth of explanations to each interview question.

Uniformity in Teacher vis-à-vis Parental response made me to highly assume that each preceding parent or teacher had the same mind set as the previous ones. This was in particular to the interviews at Nakakandwa R/C Primary School (NPS). This was specifically on the question of parental responsibility asked to the teachers on one hand inter alia teacher responsibility asked to the parents on the other hand. However of significant interest was that the parents and teachers

expressed divergent opinions and responses to the two questions. Thus responses were not purely uniform from the respondents as had been claimed.

Also experienced was a problem involving diversion in data obtained on a particular aspects at both Schools. Firstly, this was experienced in the conduct of interviews wherein different responses on a particular issue were at times made by the different teachers or parents sampled. In short this differentiation in evidence was realized in the application of a particular method, in this case interviews. Secondly as well was that certain interview responses by teachers on a particular theme appeared different from information examined in the School reports. In short the differentiation in evidence was realized in the application of two data collection methods. for instance at NPS on the aspect of parental attendance in PTAs, three teachers expressed low attendance whereas 2 stated moderate attendance. Still on the same aspect of parental participation in PTAs, the PTA minutes of previous meetings revealed a moderate and not low involvement. This rather re-emphasized the necessity of relying on a variety of both Primary and Secondary data instruments.

### **3.8 Mechanisms for Promoting Validity and Reliability**

"A reliable measure is one that gives consistent results" (McIntyre, 2005, p.67). A reliable measure however is not necessarily a valid one and "reliability cannot compensate for low validity" (Pennings et al, 2006, p.67). "A valid measure is one that is measuring what you think you are measuring"(McIntyre, 2005, p.66).

In case the methodology and rationale of a researcher's "observations and inferences" (King et al, 1994, p.8) are made implicit, then it limits any attempts by the academia to measure the validity of the research pursued

#### **3.8.1 Measures adopted to ensure Validity**

King et al (1994) argue that to ensure validity in research, its essential for a researcher to focus on the "observed data and avoid the unobserved data" (King et al, 1994, p.25). In this research, i focused on information obtained from interviews, direct observation and documentary analysis. Under documentary analysis i as well focused on particular School reports, files, minutes of PTA and SMC meetings as already specified under the methodology chapter, section..... It should be

noted that certain documents such as the Education Act for Uganda, 2008 and the UPE Policy Hand-Book,2009 obtained prior to field work simply provided the departure point on discussing literature relating to community participation in Uganda's UPE. In no way did they serve as data sources. Data sources in addition relied on the field work observations and responses of interviewees . Through this therefore, i was able to maintain focus on data observed from the field.

Mechanisms of ensuring validity in my research can as well be discussed in relation to "construct, internal and external validity" (Yin, 2009, p.40).

### **3.8.2 Construct validity**

This focuses on adopting appropriate operational measures of the concepts highlighted in research (Yin, 2009). This is considered a challenging point for researchers employing the case design (Yin, 2009). The concepts employed in this study were participation, performance and empowerment. To ensure adequate operational definitions , I narrowed each of the concepts to "specific forms" (Yin, 2009, p.42) while at the same time defining them in relation to the research questions. For participation, the specific form adopted was community participation particularly SMC and PTA responsibilities. Performance specifically focused on academic performance of pupils in two Primary Schools. Empowerment adopted four specific measures; information access, inclusion, accountability and organization capacity. Equally important is that the specific measures of participation and performance are defined in the research questions.

Ensuring construct validity did not stop at only adopting adequate measures of concepts, however of significance was the incorporation of concepts that were employed by previous "published research" (Yin, 2009, p.42). Therefore community participation, performance and empowerment were not necessarily my own creation, but i relied on earlier research by the IOB Impact evaluation(2005) on UPE in Uganda that examined academic performance i Grades 1 to 7. Equally relevant was a review of two Theses from the Department of Administration & Organization Theory, UiB. As already mentioned, these were by Fushieni (2005) that adopts SMC-PTA participation alongside School performance. Masue (2010) employs the SMC and empowerment discussions. In short, the concepts community participation, performance and empowerment were utilized significantly by earlier studies hence their adoption for my research.

Furthermore as Yin (2009) emphasizes, construct validity is an arena that applies particularly to "data collection"(Yin, 2009, p.41). To my study, this applied to field work carried out from June 1st to August 15th, 2013. To ensure adequateness of concept measures and to answer the question of where and what was done? during data collection, i created a Case Report explaining these two issues. This report was submitted to my course instructors on September 17th, 2013 and thus was reviewed by "key informants" (Yin, 2009, p.42). Without their approval my research would not have adequately satisfied the construct validity test.

### **3.8.3 Internal Validity**

This is an area of concern applying to the analysis stage (Yin, 2009). More importantly for case studies is that internal validity relates to the creation of adequate inferences between the variables of study (Yin, 2009). Thus this form of validity is considered to be relevant to explanatory cases as opposed to exploratory ones (Yin, 2009). From this assertion, my study focused on explaining the impact of community participation on pupil academic performance. However it was important to appreciate that community involvement is not the only determinant of performance. Therefore one threat to internal validity that would have arisen in my research is the failure to realize other rival explanations that determine academic performance in Schools besides Community support. I was able to address this threat by adopting and appreciating the impact of other elements in UPE schools. These explanations as already mentioned are school facilities, teacher availability vis-à-vis absenteeism, socio-economic status of parents and automatic promotion policy. Thus as Yin (2009) states, the relevance of these factors is that they form "rival explanations" (Yin, 2009, p.43) to phenomena. This provided the prospect of "explanation building " (Yin, 2009, p.43) in my study. To ignore this would have left a gap in determining the extent to which community support is relevant in promoting pupil achievement vis-à-vis other elements.

### **3.8.4 External Validity**

This concerns the generalization of results obtained in a particular context to other contexts (Yin, 2009). Thus can the evidence obtained from KPS and NPS be generalized to other UPE School settings. In discussing external validity, its important to re-visit the rationale of generalization in this study. This applied to "analytic generalization" (Yin, 2009, p.43) where i related the findings

of study to the four empowerment indicators; information access, inclusion, accountability and organization capacity. The evidence from KPS and NPS can be generalized to the four indicators mentioned above wherein communities at KPS were empowered in relation to each of the empowerment indicators. This enabled them (SMC & PTA) to effectively fulfill their responsibilities thus fostering improved performance at KPS. On the contrary communities at NPS lacked three forms of empowerment (information access, accountability & organization capacity). This resulted into the ineffectiveness of the SMC and PTA in meeting their tasks, thus undermining prospects for improved and quality performance.

Equally important is that under section.... on the unit of analysis, i have specified the criteria used in selecting the two Schools. I relied on School performance levels, KPS is high performing while NPS is low performing. Furthermore the locality or context of the School was Kayunga District. In short both Schools are located in the same District area. Thus from this specification on analytic generalization and rationale of selecting study units, similar cases can be carried out placing into consideration the same approach as mine. Without placing these factors into consideration, attempts to replicate the findings of this empirical inquiry would be futile.

### **3.8.5 Measures adopted for Promoting Reliability**

In terms of reliability, i have maximized for replication of this research by future scholars. This is evidenced by a clear record of *where and what was done* .This concerns the number of interviews, observations and documents analyzed. More importantly is the discussion of what type of data was generated from each data source, and how this provided answers to the research questions.

In terms of validity, as already stated, the measurement of Academic performance, adopted two forms, PLE performance results and Progression vis-à-vis Repetition results of the schools. The important issue is that these operational values are widely adopted in literature on school performance. These include IOB Impact Evaluation(2008) on Primary Education in Uganda and Munene(2009) study on the Management of UPE in Uganda. Therefore this can be a guide to other researchers with similar themes of interest. More importantly as well is that the conceptual frameworks that define community participation in Primary education relied heavily on the

theoretical frameworks by Masue(2010) and Fusheini(2005), two relevant pieces of literature that offer a valuable discussion on communities.

### **3.8.6 Transcription of data**

The data obtained through interviews involved the use of two tape recorders that enabled a record of each respondent's discussion on an issue. Immediately after which was a writing down or note taking of this information in word and statistical form. Word and statistical representation of data was applied as well to the data emerging from direct observations and documentary research, and was later arranged in a tabular form so as comparisons between both schools can be clearly seen. This is to be discussed in the data and analysis section.

### **3.8.7 Ethical Considerations**

Before and during the applicability of interviews, documentary research and direct observation, I adhered to ethical guidelines while interacting with the selected sample. One such guideline involved assurance to all the interviewees that their responses will be kept confidential and privately. This therefore applied to each of the interview dates reflected in interview table. More importantly in the write-up of my Thesis, there is no mention of any respondent's initials. This has ensured their protection beyond any public scrutiny by other officials.

Secondly while preparing for fieldwork in the Spring semester 2013, I was instructed by a staff of the Norwegian Research Council to obtain a letter from the School Head-Teacher of each School indicating their acceptance of my need to perform research in relation to their respective schools. This was viewed as necessary because my study incorporates children (pupils) considered to be a vulnerable and protected group of individuals. I achieved this from both School Heads prior to methodology implementation.

## **3.9 A Revalidation of the Research Process**

As King et al (1994) note, there can exist a challenge in implementing the research design. This is in relation to the theory, research questions and evidence gathered(data). A researcher may realize that the data obtained does not support the already adopted theory OR there may arise a

need in increasing the research questions so as to make a fit between theory and data(King et al, 1994). During the conduct of the field work , I found it necessary to review the research questions and theoretical premises against the data being gathered. This created the realization on the need for a further question.

Accordingly therefore, I added a 6th question to the already 5 questions that constituted my proposed study design and initial field visits. This question pertained to understanding the impact of community participation on the academic performance in UPE Schools. This was relevant in order to ascertain the effect of responsibility fulfillment by community groups(SMC & PTA). The extent to which these communities fulfill their roles was determined by research question 5. Thus it necessitated the adoption of another question seeking to draw the relationship between the responsibilities undertaken and performance. On the other hand, the observations, interviews and documents utilized did not undermine the research questions as they enabled an adequate exposure to evidence.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN UPE SCHOOLS: ANALYSIS OF KANGULUMIRA C/U PRIMARY SCHOOL(KPS) & NAKAKANDWA R/C PRIMARY SCHOOL (NPS).

#### 4.1 Introduction

This is the first chapter on the empirical findings and analysis on academic performance from the two schools studied in the field; KPS and NPS. Besides highlighting the statistics of both schools' performances, it was relevant to analyze both KPS and NPS in terms of the *academic performance determinants* mentioned in chapter two. The data gathered in relation to academic performance relied heavily on documentary review of school files and records, interviews with head-teachers and teachers and direct observation in particular to the composition of school facilities, scholastic materials, feeding and hygiene. These data instruments were undertaken at both KPS and NPS.

In this chapter, I present the findings and analysis of each school's performance separately. This was in order to ensure that it is explicit to the reader while limiting any misunderstandings that would arise in case the two schools were presented concurrently. Therefore I begin with Kangulumira C/U Primary School that is abbreviated in this study as KPS and located in Kayunga district. Having reviewed education statistics on Kayunga district prior to fieldwork, I observed that KPS is one of the top quality schools in the district. This explains why I label it as a high performing school. After which the attention shifts to Nakakandwa R/C Primary School abbreviated as NPS. As already mentioned, an observation of literature on Kayunga district revealed that NPS is one of the low performing schools in the district. Thus I attach the label; low performing school to it. Conclusions will follow.

#### 4.2 Case Study one: High Performing School in Kayunga District: Kangulumira C/U Primary School(KPS)

The purpose of this section is to examine the academic performance standard of Kangulumira C/U Primary School(KPS) alongside the factors that have supported this standard. Prior to fieldwork investigations, I had already obtained secondary data showcasing that KPS is the

highest performing UPE school in Kayunga district. This is why I label it as a high performing school. More importantly, the evidence gained from the field, justified that KPS is indeed the highest performing UPE school in Kayunga, district. The argument in this section is that performance is dependent on a variety of determinants as already revealed under chapter two. which Therefore it shall be important to showcase the determinants or factors that promote the school's academic performance besides community participation that will be presented in chapter five. The section nonetheless begins with a simple discussion of the KPS's school location and the structure of leadership exercised in the school. After which shall be an examination of the performance of KPS pupils in PLE and school examinations. From this shall emerge an examination of the features that support the performance initially highlighted.

#### **4.3.1 Introduction**

Kangulumira C/U Primary School(KPS) is located in Kiwugu village, a semi-urban area one kilometer from Kangulumira Sub county, in Ntenjeru county, Kayunga District(Kayunga District, Local Government report, 2012). A County is the largest administrative unit in a District or State. A Sub-County is the second largest administrative unit after a County in a District or State. The school was founded in 1954 with an enrollment of only 22 pupils(Kayunga District, Local Government Report, 2012). As of June 2013, the enrollment of pupils stood at 1259, with 611 boys and 648 girls. The teacher number constitutes 24 full-time teaching staff.

The school comprises of seven Primary classes or grades; Primary one(P.1), Primary two(P.2), Primary three(P.3), Primary four(P.4), Primary five(P.5), Primary six(P.6) and Primary seven(P.7). In each of these class levels, pupils are imparted with knowledge on the curriculum in relation to four subjects; Mathematics, English, Social Studies and Science.

Across the seven class levels(P.1 to P.7), the enrollment numbers of both boys and girls is revealed in the following table 7:

**Table 7.: Boys and Girls enrollment at Kangulumira C/U Primary School(KPS), June 2013**

Primary Class level	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
P.1	104	109	213
P.2	56	59	115
P.3	75	76	151
P.4	100	110	210
P.5	104	114	218
P.6	123	130	253
P.7	49	50	099
TOTAL	611	648	1259

(Source: KPS file from Head-teacher, June 20th,2013)

An observation of the pupil statistics for each class level reveals that there is a fluctuation in pupil enrollment characterized by declines and increases in pupil numbers across the different class levels. In other words, there is no uniform pattern in pupil enrollment from Primary one(P.1) to Primary seven(P.7). The statistics in the table above reveal that enrollment at Primary one level(P.1) is quite high which can be attributed to the increased calls by Government for parents to send their children aged six years to attain basic education under the UPE Schools. Nonetheless there occurs a fluctuation as evidenced by a decline in pupil enrollment for Primary two(P.2). The School's head-teacher attributed this sudden decline to drop-outs wherein parents are unable to send their children to school after the first year of learning(P.1). The head-teacher as well emphasized that such early pupil dropouts has more to do with the pupils' parents who often decline to account for their children's absence from school. Similarly, sudden decline in pupil numbers is witnessed in Primary seven(P.7) wherein the pupils in Primary seven constitute nearly a quarter of those in Primary six(P.6). The KPS head-teacher attributed this to two issues; *repetition* and *change of school*. Accordingly, pupils in Primary six(P.6) who are unable to pass school examinations at the end of the year are given two options; to either repeat class or change

school. The view by the KPS head-teacher is shared among the five teachers that I interviewed. In the words of one teacher(T.1),

*we set strict pass marks for Primary six pupils in relation to the four subjects(English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies) because our goal is to obtain top quality students that will represent our school in national examinations(PLE). The pass-mark for each subject is usually 45percent. Any pupil who registers more than two scores below 45percent will not be promoted to P.7 Class(T.1).*

Once more, the head-teacher stressed that the decision on whether to repeat or change school is determined by the pupils' parents. The KPS head teacher further revealed that most parents decide in favor of repetition as opposed to changing their children to a new School.

Another feature of the fluctuation is the gradual increase in pupil numbers from Primary two(P.2) to Primary six(P.6) as the previous table reveals. The head-teacher at KPS emphasized that this gradual increase across levels P.2, P.3, P.4, P.5 and P.6 is attributed to *enrollment of new pupils to the school* as well as the *presence of repeaters*. Accordingly, the head-teacher revealed that parents with children in other schools are often attracted to the reputation of KPS and as such seek for their children's enrollment into KPS. The head-teacher emphasized that this practice of admitting new pupils into KPS does not apply at Primary seven(P.7) class level but applies only to the class levels below Primary seven. The head-teacher further emphasized that such prospective pupils are given assessments depending on the level of learning and must pass these assessments above 40percent in order to gain admission into KPS. In short therefore, when new pupils are admitted to KPS for instance at Primary five level, they are grouped together with repeating students alongside those students promoted from Primary four level which in turn accounts for the magnitude in pupil enrollment.

### **4.3.2 School Governance Structure**

The administration or leadership of KPS comprises of management body, School authorities and pupil leaders. KPS is headed by a School Management Committee(SMC) synonymous with the Board of Directors commonly expressed in modern day public administration. This committee formally recognized as a community, exercises the highest degree of authority. I discuss the SMC operations at KPS in detail under Chapter five on community participation.

Below the School Management constitutes the head-teacher who is in charge of ensuring the daily running of School activities(classroom learning and co-curricular). More importantly, the head-teacher at KPS convenes meetings for all teaching staff members so as to orientate them with SMC views, programs or incoming reforms.

The head-teacher is assisted by two deputies; one in charge of academics and discipline and the other in charge of pupil welfare such as feeding, hospitality and health care while at School. These two deputy head-teachers are gender sensitive as one is a female and the other male. The two deputies may as well chair staff meetings in the absence of the head-teacher. More specifically, the deputy head-teachers at KPS often chair School assemblies weekly. Assemblies are held every Monday morning at 8:00am to 9:00am wherein pupils across all class levels assemble together to receive important communication from the deputy head-teachers. One such important communication concerns emphasizing the need for all pupils to be disciplined, smartly dressed and time conscious.

Below the two deputy head-teachers constitutes the entire body of teaching staff members whose authority is most commonly expressed in the classroom through teaching as well as in supervising co-curricular activities. It is from within the teaching staff members that associations with parents emerge. This association is known as the Parent-Teacher Association(PTA) that is to be analyzed in greater length under chapter five. It must be appreciated that the PTA offers an avenue for parents to become active participants in school development.

Below the teachers and at a student level exist what are labeled as School-Prefects. These Prefects are pupils elected by fellow students to assume leadership roles. Accordingly, the Prefectural body at KPS comprises of six leaders; one head prefect, one assistant head prefect, a timekeeper, two cafeteria prefects and one prefect in charge of School cleanliness.

### **4.3.3 KPS Performance at PLE**

As already highlighted under chapter two, pupils in Primary seven class sit for annual national examinations known as Primary Leaving Examinations(PLE) which determine their entry into Secondary education. This section will therefore demonstrate the PLE performance of KPS pupils across a time span of ten years. The argument in this section will focus on whether the

School's(KPS) performance has improved or declined based on the results over the past ten years(2003-2012).

Pupils who sit for Primary Leaving Exams are grouped into divisions based on their overall performance in all four subject curriculum; English, Math, Science and Social Studies. Accordingly there exist six divisions, with each division comprising of a percentage of pupils. What is more important is that Division one is considered the best or highest level of achievement under Primary Leaving Examination(PLE). This is in turn preceded by divisions two, three, four, five and six. The fifth and sixth division are labeled as division U and division X respectively. Division U comprises of pupils with the highest rate of failure wherein a pupil fails all four subjects examined. Division X comprises of pupils who do not sit for any or all examinations in a particular year. In other words incase a pupil for unknown reasons sat for only three examinations and misses the fourth exam, he or she is grouped under division X that signifies incomplete results. Therefore such a student is in the same arena as one who never attempted a single exam. For clarity, the divisions one, two, three, four, five and six are synonymous to the classes of degrees and diplomas obtained at higher learning(University education); First class, Upper Second class and Lower Second class. It follows therefore that within each of these classes(First, Upper Second and Lower Second) are students with scores that amount to each respective class. In the same way Primary seven(P.7) pupils of every school are categorized into divisions based on their achievements at the annual Primary Leaving examinations. This categorization is done by the Uganda National Examinations Board(UNEB). This is in relation to their achievement levels in the national examinations.

Accordingly therefore, the PLE performance of Primary seven(P.7) pupils at KPS is summarized in the proceeding table:

**Table 8. KPS Performance in Primary Leaving Examinations(2003-2012).**

YEAR	DIV.I	DIV II	DIV III	DIV IV	DIV U	DIV X	TOTAL
2003	23	12	12	0	0	5	52
2004	10	50	4	0	0	6	70
2005	9	79	9	2	0	6	105
2006	23	81	10	1	0	0	115
2007	19	70	8	0	0	12	109
2008	6	88	13	0	0	10	117
2009	15	64	11	1	0	5	97
2010	23	76	12	3	2	2	118
2011	26	78	1	3	0	1	109
2012	31	54	3	3	0	1	92
TOTAL	185	652	83	13	2	48	

(Source: KPS file from head teacher, June 2013)

The table reveals the total number of pupils who sat for the PLE exams from 2003 to 2012 and their respective divisions. Accordingly, for the year 2003, a total of 52 pupils wrote the PLE exams of which 23 obtained division I, 12 in division II and III respectively whereas no pupil registered a division IV and division U performance. Nonetheless only 5 pupils had incomplete results having either missed one or all exams. Comparing 2003's performance with that of 2012 would first of all have to take account of the pupil numbers that sat these exams. As earlier stated, 52 pupils were examined in 2003 in comparison to 92 pupils in 2012. There are two similarities observed in relation to the 2003 KPS performance and that of 2012. The first similarity is that no pupil registered failure in all the four examinations. Secondly, KPS's performance in 2003 recorded a uniform number of 12 pupils in division II and III respectively.

Similarly 2012 witnessed a uniformity in the number of pupils in division III and IV registering 3 pupils each.

As earlier noted Primary Schools in Uganda have one uniform goal or objective which is to enable their Primary Seven pupils achieve division one(div.1) grades. In other words pupils in Primary seven are cautioned to work towards obtaining grades that fall in the range of division one. An observation of KPS's PLE performance reveals that since 2003, pupils at the School have maintained the reputation of gaining grades that fall under division one. Nonetheless it is relevant to point out that the trend of division one(div.1) pupils at KPS has been inconsistent as the previous table reveals. This can be seen in fluctuating numbers of pupils in division one. From 2003 to 2005, the trend appeared to consistently reflect a decline in division one pupils from 23 in 2003, to 10 in 2004 and 9 in 2005. However a sharp increase is realized in 2006 as the number of pupils in division one increased to 23. Similarly, the trend in division one pupils from 2006 to 2008 reflects a consistent decline in division one students at KPS, from 23 in 2006 to 19 in 2007 and 6 in 2008. Declines have been matched with improvements as the trend from 2008 to 2012 indicates. In other words, from 2008 to 2012, the number of pupils registering division one grades gradually increased with each preceding year. This is evident in the increase of pupils in division one from 6 in 2008, to 15 in 2009, 23 in 2010, 26 in 2011 and 31 in 2012. These statistics of KPS performance at national examinations highlight the fact that improved consistency has been achieved over the five year span(2008-2012).

**Table 9. Percentage of pupils in Division one(div.1) from 2003 to 2012 at KPS.**

YEAR	PERCENTAGE IN DIVISION 1/ GRADE 1
2003	44%
2004	14%
2005	9%

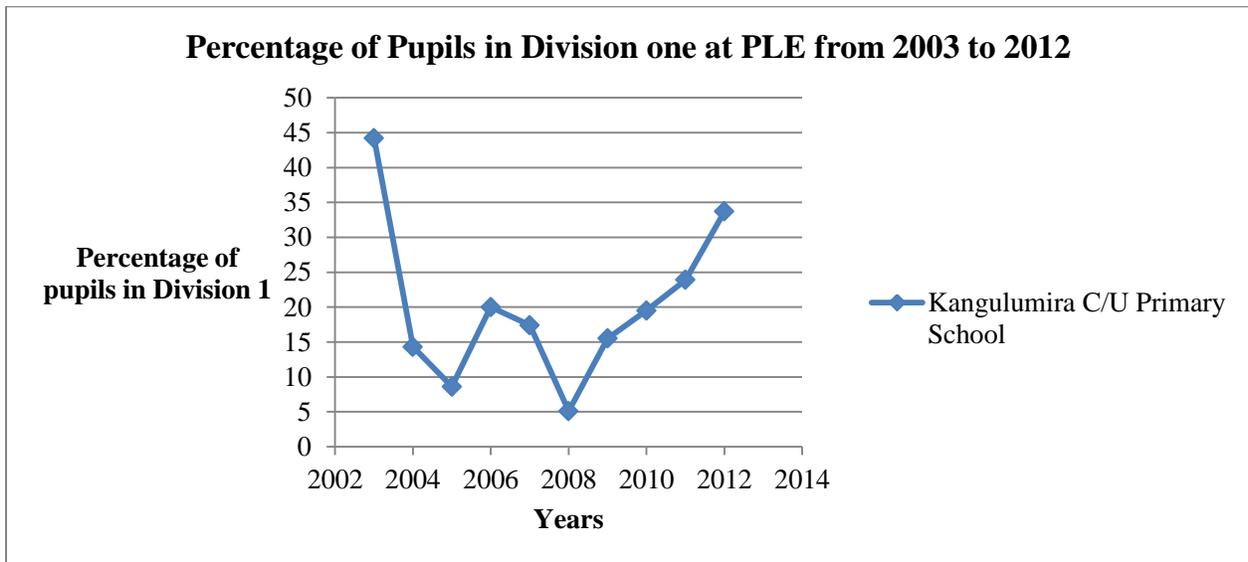
2006	20%
2007	17%
2008	5%
2009	16%
2010	20%
2011	24%
2012	37%

(Source: Author's own creation)

The previous table clearly reflects that the performance in terms of division one pupils is improving. This can be seen in the increase from 5percent in 2008 to 16percent in 2009, 20percent in 2010, 24percent in 2011 and 37percent in 2012.

In summary therefore, the central question in relation to the PLE statistics at KPS concerns whether academic performance in the school has improved or not. This as already highlighted constitutes the second research question of this study. An observation of the pupil performance reveals that 2012 recorded the highest number of division one students. On a similar note, the school has registered only two pupils failing Primary leaving exams as witnessed in 2010. In short, with an improved number of division one pupils between 2008 to 2012 alongside no failures, it can be argued that the performance of KPS in national examinations has improved. in this case among pupils sitting for PLE. The following line graph below indicates, the performance among Primary seven pupils since 2008 is on a gradual increase. This increase has been attained despite the fluctuations between 2004 and 2008 as the following line graph indicates.

**Fig. 10: Line Graph on Trend in Division one pupils**



(Source: Author's creation)

Across a four year span(2008-2012), it is fair to conclude that the school's performance is improving. In other words, in order to draw conclusions on the trend in pupil performance at KPS, I compared the Primary leaving examination results of P.7 pupils since 2003 and within such a timeframe, it would therefore be possible to identify inconsistencies, improvements and declining trends.

An assessment of the academic performance at Kangulumira C/U Primary does not only entail an examination of PLE results for Primary Seven, but of equal importance is an analysis of the performance of pupils in classes Primary one to six. Having obtained data from the School's Deputy Head Teacher in Charge of Academics on the number of pupils promoted per class vis-à-vis repeaters and drop outs, i create a table synonymous with that used by the IOB Impact Evaluation of UPE in Uganda, 2008 in an attempt to account for any improvement in pupil performance across classes, Primary one to six. The time span for these performance levels is three years, from 2010 to 2012. The reason for focusing on this time period is because it constituted the available data on each of the six classes.

**Table 10. Percentage of Promoted, Repeaters and Dropout students from 2010 to 2012.**

Class Transition	2010	2011	2012
Primary one(P.1) to Primary two(P.2).	Promoted 40%	Promoted 45%	Promoted 47%
	Repeated 40%	Repeated 40%	Repeated 38%
	Drop Outs 20%	Drop Outs 15%	Drop Outs 15%
Primary two(P.2) to Primary three(P.3)	Promoted 35%	Promoted 45%	Promoted 51%
	Repeated 45%	Repeated 40%	Repeated 38%
	Drop Outs 20%	Drop Outs 15%	Drop Outs 11%
Primary three(P.3)to Primary four(P.4)	Promoted 41%	Promoted 44%	Promoted 48%

	Repeated 44%	Repeated 42%	Repeated 40%
	Drop Outs 15%	Drop Outs 14%	Drop Outs 12%
Primary four(P.4)to Primary five(P.5)	Promoted 37%	Promoted 38%	Promoted 41%
	Repeated 33%	Repeated 32%	Repeated 31%
	Drop Outs 30%	Drop Outs 30%	Drop Outs 28%
Primary five(P.5) to Primary six(P.6).	Promoted 35%	Promoted 41%	Promoted 45%
	Repeated 40%	Repeated 37%	Repeated 32%
	Drop Outs 25%	Drop Outs 22%	Drop Outs 23%
Primary	Promoted	Promoted	Promoted

six(P.6) to Primary seven(P.7)	38%	42%	43%
	Repeated 32%	Repeated 30%	Repeated 29%
	Drop Outs 30%	Drop Outs 28%	Drop Outs 28%

(Author's compilation, June 2013)

From the table above, the performance at Kangulumira in classes one to six in terms of progress, repetition and drop outs indicates an improvement. This is evidenced by the number of pupils in each class transition category for instance those in category P.1-P.2, P.2-P.3 and P.3-P.4 witnessed a better performance in each year following with lower number of repeaters and drop outs while at the same time having more pupils promoted to the next class. Equally important, an improvement applies to the transitions in classes P.4-P.5, P.5-P.6 and P.6-P.7. This is because as the rates of drop outs and repeaters among pupils in particular the transition of P.6 to P.7 falls, the promotion numbers rises. Therefore the available data on PLE results and annual school examinations of Kangulumira C/U Primary school, indicates an improvement. A mention of an improvement in performance without an analysis of the determinants of this performance in the school would leave a gap in accounting for what are the drivers behind this improved performance. Therefore the next chapter seeks to analyze Kangulumira in context of the performance indicators raised under the literature review.

#### **4.3.4 Determinants of Academic Performance at KPS**

Having highlighted the improvement in pupil performance at KPS, there is need to reflect on the factors that have enabled this improvement to take place. These factors apply to the determinants of academic performance raised under literature review in Chapter two. Therefore the argument in this section centers around the relevance of these determinants to academic performance at KPS. Are these factors promoting or undermining performance in KPS? The determinants of

academic performance at KPS centered on pupil enrollment, School facilities, teacher availability and qualifications.

To ensure, that adequate measurement and discussion on the determinants of KPS's academic performance, interviews with the head-teacher, one deputy head-teacher and five teachers on these determinants proved vital. These two groups were best suited to handle these questions in comparison to the parents. This is because, the head-teacher alongside the teachers retain this information in their staff offices. Secondly secondary data from the head-teacher's office inform of School files, teachers' attendance book and first hand observations were relevant in this regard.

#### **4.3.4.1 Pupil Enrollment**

As already indicated under chapter two, enrollment is often high in UPE Schools as compared to non-UPE Schools. The total number of pupils at KPS as of June, 2013 amounted to 1259. Despite the high pupil numbers at the School, senior classes in particular Primary seven(P.7) register moderate numbers. As the previous table revealed, 99 pupils attended Primary seven(P.7) in comparison to the 253 students in Primary six(P.6). A moderate number of pupils creates a closer teacher-pupil ratio and ensures that teachers may identify pupils' having challenges in understanding various parts of the syllabi. It is important to highlight the fact that pupils in Primary seven class at KPS are moderate in number as compared to other classes. The head-teacher attributes this as a strategy to "*monitor effectively each student in P.7, identify his or her curriculum-based challenges and drawing pupils closer to their teachers(teacher-pupil ratio).*" It is important to highlight the fact that these Primary seven pupils represent the School in the annual national examinations.

#### **4.3.4.2 Composition of School facilities**

School facilities encompass a wide range of furniture and structures like "classrooms, desks, staff rooms and staff quarters(homes) that are essential to both pupils and teachers"(Ezenne, 2012, p.42). With high pupil enrollment across a number of UPE schools in Uganda, the facilities in these respective schools are placed under strain or are over utilized. This results is the inability of several UPE schools in Uganda to cope with the annual incoming high number of pupils in

Primary one. At Kangulumira C/U Primary school, the composition of school facilities reveals the following:-

**Table 11. School Facilities at KPS**

Facility	Number
Class Room	13
Desks	330
Staff Room	1
Staff Quarters	3
TOTAL	347

(Source: Author's observations)

The interest with these facilities, is to interpret what implication they bear for quality learning, a prerequisite for high academic performance. Therefore the focus is in determining whether or not the problem of over congestion in classrooms is felt among pupils at Kangulumira. This requires analyzing the number of school facilities vis-à-vis pupil enrollment, to determine aspects of adequate or inadequate class spacing among pupils in the school. This is revealed by table 12 below:-

**Table 12. Class facilities versus Pupil enrollment at KPS**

CLASS	TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS PER CLASS	NUMBER OF CLASS ROOMS FOR EACH CLASS	NUMBER OF DESKS PER CLASS	NUMBER OF PUPILS PER DESK
P.1	213	2	50	4
P.2	115	2	50	2
P.3	151	2	50	3

P.4	210	2	50	4
P.5	218	2	50	4
P.6	253	2	50	5
P.7	099	1	30	3
TOTAL	1259	13	330	

(Source: Author's Compilation from Direct observation and school report from Deputy Head Teacher, Academics, June, 2013)

It must be noted that the ideal number of pupils per desk should be five pupils at maximum. Therefore the schools' facilities are utilized to enable each pupil attain quality instruction in class. This has enabled a decrease in cases of pupil squeezing and those forced to seat on the class floor, that Munene (2009) categorizes as synonymous with UPE school facilities in Uganda. To appreciate the school facilities available at the school is not to underscore the high number of pupils in particular classes Primary one to six. As the Primary six class reveals, 253 pupils appears quite a large number that would place a strain on school facilities. However each class besides Primary seven has got two streams. Streams in this case mean the grouping of pupils of one class level(P.1 or P.7) into different classrooms based usually based on their performance. So often students are grouped into A, B or C streams. This has created spacing for pupils in a particular class. While appreciating the factors supporting performance at the school, the school's Head Teacher(H.T.1) emphasized "*Kangulumira C/U Primary school is always the best school at PLE in Kayunga District, year after year among Government and private Schools as well. This is supported by a number of factors which include regular assessment of pupils, construction of classrooms and regular stocking of desks alongside*"(H.T.1)

#### **4.3.4.3 Teacher Presence versus Absenteeism at School Premises**

Teacher attendance to duty is an area of concern across the body of UPE schools in Uganda (Kasente, 2010) with varying results. At Kangulumira C/U Primary School as of June,2013 while on field work, the composition of teachers constituted 24full-time based teachers. Of these 15 are male and 9 are female. Much as interviews generated relevant data in this study, this area of

teacher attendance relied equally on direct observation and documentary analysis to make meaningful interpretations of data obtained. Obtaining data on attendance of teachers and making meaningful interpretations of it cannot be based only on interviews but necessitated documentary analysis and direct observations, from which data obtained is analyzed to identify any repeating patterns. Thus obtaining the actual teacher composition was based on the response of the school's Head Teacher to the question of what number of teachers are in the school, as well as the school report from the Head Teacher's office and daily observations. Data from the three methods was compared revealing a common statistic of 24 teachers. In terms of teacher attendance, Kangulumira C/U Primary School does not experience cases of absenteeism. This is because each classroom is occupied with a teacher as the instructor and pupils. From 08:30am in the morning to 12:00 noon, teachers of classes P.1 to P.2 carry out lessons regularly. Similarly classes P.3 to P.7 are subjected to classes from 08:30am to 4:30pm.

#### **4.3.4.4 Teacher Qualifications**

Teacher qualifications is of significant importance in fostering quality education in Primary schools(Kasente, 2010). This is because teachers with different qualifications are able to provide expertise to the school Curriculum by supplementing each other's work. As expressed through the responses of the District Education Officer(DEO), Kayunga District and 5 of the school teachers at KPS, Grade III Certificate constitutes the minimum level of academic qualification that is required of Primary school teachers in Uganda. The training of prospective teachers is conducted at a variety of Teacher Training Colleges(PTCs) and takes a minimum of two years for the Grade III Certificate training (Document from DEO Office, Kayunga District). Primary school teacher training is as well upgraded to levels of Diploma requiring two year training and at the highest level, University degree requiring three year training (Document from DEO Office, Kayunga District). However as the District Education Officer revealed in explaining the status of teacher qualifications in Kayunga District, most teachers with University degree qualifications tend to shun teaching in Primary schools. An interview with each of the 5 teachers at KPS on the question of their qualifications revealed each of the three qualifications. In other wards 1 teacher is qualified with a Bachelor's degree, 3 have the Diploma and 1 with the Grade III Certificate. This however does not represent the qualifications of the entire composition of 24 teachers at the school. Therefore this necessitated a review of the teacher qualifications in a Staff File obtained

from the Office of the Deputy Head Teacher in Charge of Academics. Accordingly the composition of the teacher qualifications at KPS is summarized in the table below:

**Table 13. KPS Teacher Qualifications**

Teacher Qualifications	Number of Teachers
University Degree	2
Diploma	16
Grade III Certificate	6

(Source: Author's compilation from KPS Staff handbook)

#### **4.4 Summary on KPS Academic Performance.**

The first part of this chapter sought to determine whether KPS is a top quality school in Uganda as the reputation provides. Accordingly, it can be concluded that from the PLE statistics since 2003, KPS has maintained its academic standard marked by a substantial amount of pupils obtaining grades in division one(div.1). Has the school performance improved? An observation of the Primary leaving examination(PLE) results for Primary seven pupils and results of Primary one to Primary six pupils in school examinations reveal a trend that suggests a clear improvement, most especially for the years 2008 to 2012. Nonetheless it must also be highlighted that prior to this improved trend, there had been inconsistent performances especially at PLE. In other words across a ten year period dating 2003 to 2012, performance at KPS has witnessed several improvements and a few declines most notably between the years, 2004-2005, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 as data provided. Pupil enrollment at KPS, teacher availability and qualifications as well as the school's facilities have earmarked this improvement.

The features within the school have been supportive to promoting quality learning. I particularly find the teacher qualifications at KPS inspiring and this is because teachers in UPE schools

usually constitute teaching staff with low qualifications. As data provided, a section of KPS teachers have satisfactory qualifications.

Having presented performance data and analysis on KPS, the attention shifts to NPS and this is addressed in the next section.

#### **4.5 Case Study Two: Low Performing School in Kayunga District: Nakakandwa R/C Primary School(NPS)**

Having discussed the level of academic performance in KPS, the second part of this chapter seeks to highlight the trend in academic performance among pupils at NPS. Just as with KPS, NPS is a UPE school located in the district of Kayunga.

NPS was founded by the Roman Catholic Church in Uganda, in 1980 and was taken over by the Government in 1990. The school is located in Kayunga District, Busaana Sub county, Nampanyi Parish in Nakakandwa Village, a highly remote area. The school staff administration is headed by the Head teacher, assisted by the Deputy head teacher and 10 fulltime teachers.

##### **4.5.1 Pupil enrollment at NPS**

The total pupil enrollment as of June 2013 was 749 as indicated in the following table :

**Table 14. Enrollment numbers at NPS 2013**

CLASS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
P.1	110	140	250
P.2	47	54	101
P.3	40	38	78
P.4	43	56	99
P.5	40	80	120
P.6	18	42	60

P.7	17	24	41
TOTAL	315	434	749

(Source: Head-teacher's file at NPS)

From the table 14 it is evidenced that enrollment at NPS is highest in Primary one which is similar to enrollment at Kangulumira Primary School(KPS). This according to the head teacher at NPS is a common spectacle among UPE Schools in Kayunga District and more importantly is an indicator of parents' response to calls for having their children attend primary schools. This is commonly referred to as "*boona basome*" meaning "*let all children attend School.*" However what is striking is that the enrollment number for both boys and girls drops sharply in Primary two (P.2). The Head teacher indicated that pupil drop outs largely account for this sharp declining number in P.2 pupils. No mention was made of repetition among pupils at NPS. It can be noted that between classes P.3 to P.7, there are fluctuating enrollment numbers manifested by declines and increases among both boys and girls. The declining part of the fluctuation is attributed to dropouts. These drop outs are in turn explained to be a result of some pupils being overworked by their parents and early marriages for some of the girls. These explanations were provided by the head teacher(H.T.2).

*"last year alone, we had 36 girls between classes P.5 to P.7 dropping out of School for marriage. This year so far we have had 18 girls marrying off and they have not returned to School. Also parents engage their children in household chores even when it is time for class, so some pupils are over worked at home and cannot leave home until they finish the chores. Even when they reach School, they are too tired to learn....."*(H.T.2).

It must be noted that during interviews with the head teacher and 5 teachers at NPS, the aspect of repetition among pupils as already mentioned does not operate at NPS. As already mentioned, repetition is an aspect in operation at KPS. As dropouts account for the declining enrollment , admitting of new pupils accounts for the increasing numbers in classes like P.5, where the enrollment as of June 2013 was at 80 for girls compared to 56 girls in P.4.

#### 4.5.2 School Governance Structure of Nakakandwa R/C Primary School(NPS)

The School is overall headed by a School management committee(SMC) consisting of five personnel, to be discussed in the next chapter. The daily activities at the School's premises are presided over by the head-teacher assisted by one deputy-head teacher. Thus a difference between NPS and KPS can be cited in relation to the role of deputy-head teachers. At KPS, as already mentioned, the role of deputy head-teacher is shared by two personnel which is not the case with NPS. Besides the head-teacher and deputy head-teacher, the authority in NPS stretches to the teaching staff as well who like their counterparts at KPS are charged with exposing the pupils to curriculum knowledge and co-curricular activities. Similarly as with KPS, there exists a functional Parent-Teacher Association(PTA) at NPS. This is another avenue of leadership wherein parents are involved in determining the welfare of their children while at school. Besides the parents and teaching staff, leadership is expressed among students in the form of Prefects(student leaders). At NPS these Prefects are rather appointed by the head-teacher unlike at KPS where student leaders are voted into power by fellow pupils. The number of Prefects at NPS comprises of only two pupils(a head prefect and a time-keeper).

#### 4.5.3 NPS Performance at PLE

Just as data collected at KPS revealed an improvement in School performance, similarly data was collected on NPS performance at PLE from 2003 to 2012(Ten year span). The central theme in this section is to understand or answer the research question on whether the school performance has improved? The table 15 below summarizes the performance of Primary Seven(P.7) pupils of NPS at the annual national examinations, PLE.

**Table 15. Pupil performance in Primary Leaving Examinations(PLE) at NPS**

YEAR	NO. of pupils in Division I	Division II	Division III	Division IV	Division U	Division X	TOTAL
2003	1	12	11	5	25	8	62

2004	1	8	6	16	11	1	43
2005	0	11	26	17	22	4	80
2006	2	13	26	17	24	3	85
2007	0	11	13	18	23	5	70
2008	0	2	19	9	39	9	78
2009	0	7	13	20	56	20	116
2010	0	11	19	8	41	4	83
2011	1	4	12	23	77	20	137
2012	0	10	15	14	83	19	141
TOTAL	5	89	160	147	401	93	

(Source: Author's compilation from PLE file at NPS; Division U means total failure while X means did not sit for exams)

From the above data at NPS , it is evidenced that since 2003, failures denoted by U account for the highest number of pupils that have annually sat for the national examinations. In other wards since 2003, only 5 pupils have scored grades in Division I, 102 have scored grades in Division II, 160 in Division III and 147 for Division IV. This is compared to the 401 pupils in Division U. Similarly aside from the years 2005 and 2006, each of the other years indicate Division U as having the highest number of pupils at PLE. At 2012, the total number of pupils in Divisions I, II, III and IV constitute only half of those in Division U(Failures). This is similar to the years 2008 to 2011 where in the total sum of pupils in Divisions I to IV are lower than those in Division U for each respective year.

From the above data, it is clear that high failure rates are a problem at NPS and has accounted for low performance in the school. To determine if any improvement has been made despite this low performance requires a measurement of the percentage of pupils in Division U, to determine whether the failure rate is declining or increasing subject to the total number of pupils seating for PLE. At KPS measuring the levels of performance improvement were based on comparing the

percentage of pupils in Division I from 2003 to 2012. However this approach would not be adequate for PLE data at NPS because unlike KPS, at NPS since 2003 only 5 pupils have managed to score Division I. This is in addition to the evidence revealed in table 14 where in only four years, that is 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2011 has a pupil in Division I been registered. In the other seven years(2002, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2012), no pupil at NPS has registered a Division I grade at PLE. This therefore necessitates using Division U which is synonymous with high numbers at NPS as a basis to determine if any declines in failure rates have been registered or whether the rates are on an increase. The table below summarizes this information based on failure rates from 2003 to 2012 at NPS.

**Table 16. Percentage of pupils in Division U from 2003 to 2012 at NPS**

YEAR	% OF PUPILS IN DIVISION U AT PLE
2003	40
2004	26
2005	28
2006	28
2007	33
2008	50
2009	48
2010	49
2011	56
2012	59

(Source: Author's creation)

The percentages in the table above at NPS though reflecting fluctuating failure rates from 2003 to 2005, indicate a regular increase in failures from 2005 to 2012, with a single fluctuation in 2008. Examination results from 2009 to 2012 indicate that the percentage of failures is increasing and hence no improved performance at NPS can be cited. Rather the performance is declining even with the already high Division U numbers.

As argued before under KPS performance, besides the annual PLE results for Primary Seven pupils, performance at lower class levels (P.1 to P.6) can be determined or measured as well to cite any improvement or decline in school performance. At KPS this applied to promotion, repetition and dropout trends of classes one to six. However at NPS this applies to the dropout rates in the lower classes as pupils are transiting to a preceding higher class. Promotion of pupils at NPS is based on the automatic school promotion policy. In short there is no aspect of promoting pupils based on their performance in the school term examinations. This however as argued before is not the case at KPS where promotion is based on performance in school term examinations. The percentage of drop outs at NPS is indicated in the table below and were measured based on data obtained from the Deputy Head teacher's office. This data applied to the years; 2010 to 2012 and constituted the only available data in this regard at the school.

**Table 17. Percentage of NPS Dropouts from 2010-2012**

CLASS TRANSITIONS	% OF PUPIL DROPOUTS 2010	% OF PUPIL DROPOUTS 2011	% OF PUPIL DROPOUTS 2012
P.1-P.2	45%	55%	51%
P.2-P.3	30%	48%	52%
P.3-P.4	45%	36%	41%
P.4-P.5	42%	38%	37%
P.5-P.6	50%	43%	49%

P.6-P.7	70%	75%	78%
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(Source: Author's creation)

The percentages in table 17 support the argument that drop outs are a problem affecting NPS and is a common spectacle affecting each of the classes one to seven as indicated by the class transitions in the previous table. Despite this, drop outs are evidently highest in the transition from P.6 to P.7 and this is what explains the low number of pupils in P.7, as already revealed to be at 41 pupils as of June, 2013. With these high dropout percentages coupled with the increasing failure rates, the already poor school performance at NPS is declining.

## **4.6 Determinants of Academic Performance at NPS**

It has already been highlighted that NPS and KPS are Government aided UPE schools. This means that they are accustomed to similar pupil-enrollments, facilities and teacher appointment. This is the assumption often expressed in literature on UPE in Uganda. An empirical inquiry was nonetheless conducted at NPS premises to ascertain the state of enrollment, School facilities, teacher attendance and qualifications. Just as with KPS, data from NPS on each of the specified determinants relied heavily on secondary sources, interviews with the teaching staff and first hand observations.

### **4.6.1 Pupil Enrollment**

At NPS, the pupil enrollment is quite high at Primary one as already revealed. This nonetheless is not alarming news, given the fact that several UPE schools in Uganda share the same high pupil numbers. In other words it is the trend in Ugandan UPE schools. Despite these high numbers at Primary one with 250 pupils, there is a sharp decline in pupils attending Primary two(101 pupils), Primary three(78 pupils),Primary four(99 pupils), Primary five(120 pupils), Primary six(60 pupils) and Primary seven(41 pupils). Whether this has to do with pupil promotion or repetition is another matter to be addressed in the next chapter. However as already noted, dropouts are a common spectacle and are a recurrent problem within the school. Thus the enrollment of pupils is contested by their sudden dropouts which does not serve any motivation to fellow pupils still attending classes at NPS.

### **4.6.2 School Facilities**

The School's facilities comprise of 7 classrooms only compared to 13 classrooms at KPS. When it comes to the furniture in the classrooms, unlike at KPS where the desks are sufficient to cater for every pupil, at NPS, the desks comprise of only 65. Equally important is the aspect of a staff room that is nonexistent at NPS. Thus it is a common observation to see teachers at NPS conduct duties like marking of exercise books under trees within the school premises. Staff quarters are as well nonexistent at NPS and as 3 teachers indicated, they have to travel a distance of 20kilometres daily from their far off homes to school.

The implication of the classrooms furniture on performance is that majority of pupils at NPS seat on the classroom floor which is not conducive to quality learning. This is because the 749 pupils attending NPS cannot be accommodated by only 7 classrooms and 65 desks. This creates a unfriendly learning environment for NPS pupils. Overcrowded classrooms are experienced particularly in classes P.1, P.2 and P.5, with several pupils having to acquire seats on the floor. A difference is seen particularly in the P.7 class where pupil spacing is experienced as evidenced by the enrollment number at 41 pupils.

### **4.6.3 Teacher Availability versus Absenteeism at NPS**

At NPS, the teacher composition as of June, 2013 consisted of 10 full time based teachers, with 3 females and 7 males. 3teachers cover classes P.1 to P.3 while the other 7 cover classes P.4 to P.7. Of significant observation were the teacher-subject specializations that reveal 2 teachers specializing in Mathematics, 3 in English, 3 in Social studies and 2 in Science. This information was collected from reviewing the School staff file from the Deputy head teacher.

Despite the presence of these different specializations, teacher absenteeism is a problem at NPS. This is not supported by the already small number of teachers at the school. The Deputy head teacher, explained that even when teachers report to school, some of them do not report for class duty but rather stay around the neighborhoods. This is particularly so in cases where the head teacher has not yet arrived at the school premises. During the period from June 9th to August 8th at NPS, observations revealed that although lessons are ongoing in P.5 to P.7, this was not the case in classes P.1 to P.4. This results in pupils not being inducted with the adequate curriculum

knowledge and yet they are expected to seat examinations at the end of the School term. In the head-teacher's(H.T.2) words,

" teachers in this school abscond from duty so often and without notification. This leaves the pupils staring at only a blackboard and chalk in their respective classrooms. When the absenteeism is too much, I ensure that the pupils are occupied with certain activities such as English spelling sessions and co-curricular activities so that the day is not wasted. In addition, when pupils are idle, I expose them to examination revision by supplying them with the assessments of top schools in Kayunga. However because of the gap in learning marked by teacher absenteeism, my pupils often obtain below average scores in these assessments"(H.T.2)

#### **4.6.4 Teacher Qualifications at NPS**

In terms of teacher qualifications, unlike at KPS where there are 2 teachers with Bachelor's Degree qualifications and 16 with Diplomas, at NPS all 10 teachers have Grade III Certificate qualifications. This information was obtained from the Staff file in the head-teacher's office at NPS. With this qualification composition, the aspect of supplementation that teachers at KPS experience cannot be felt at NPS. This is because the Grade III certificate represents the minimal standard of education for Primary school teachers and relying on only Grade III teachers is limiting in its own way. With a presence of Degree, Diploma and Grade III teaching staff, work can be supplemented by the teachers wherein lessons conducted by a Grade III teacher are backed up by lessons provided by Degree and Diploma teachers. However it should be noted that the 10 Grade III teachers at NPS are not recruited by the school, but rather the Education Ministry in Uganda selects and posts them to their respective schools. In other words having these 10 teachers at NPS is not the fault of the school, but different explanations account for this. As indicated before, teachers with Bachelor's degrees shun teaching in Primary schools and opt for Secondary schools. Equally important is that most Teacher Training Colleges(TTCs) in Uganda admit most prospective students, with the Grade III training the most popular course. Degree education is not conducted in these TTCs (Munene, 2009).

One of the teacher's(T.2) interviewed at NPS reflected upon the relevance of teacher-qualifications to pupil learning.

*"certain schools in the District especially the private owned schools and a few Government schools like Kangulumira Primary School(KPS) and Kayunga junior school have teachers with diverse educational qualifications besides the common Grade III Certificate. It is no wonder that such schools are the top schools in Kayunga District. Here at NPS, in case a teacher makes an error while teaching the students, there is no one to supplement or clarify on that error and as such the pupils may be misled and experience challenges in the curriculum" (T.2).*

It must be observed that the aspect of teacher qualifications at NPS in my opinion should not be a major obstacle to pupil performance because the very teachers often abscond from duty. Therefore having higher qualifications would not solve the question of absenteeism. Accordingly, absenteeism is a major concern raised and witnessed as detrimental to pupil learning and success at NPS.

#### **4.7 Summary on Academic Performance at NPS**

The data and analysis reflect that academic performance of pupils is quite low and this in relation to both national examinations and school based exams. The trend in national examinations for the Primary seven pupils reflects a decline as opposed to progress and is marked by high number of pupils failing all four examined subjects; English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies and thus obtaining a division U grade. In other words, the failure rate of P.7 pupils at PLE has been on an increase. This increase indicates a decline to a performance rate that had already been low as the trend revealed. The performance of pupils in Primary one to Primary six is characterized by regular dropouts, which simply motivates other students to quit school rather than motivate them to value their education. The school facilities are not adequate to offer a conducive learning atmosphere. Similarly, the teacher manpower rather than being supportive is instead detrimental to student learning and progress because they(teachers) make it a habit to abscond from teaching responsibilities. The qualifications of NPS teachers do not offer prospects for better performance. School facilities and scholastic aids make the scenario in conducive for quality curriculum learning on a daily basis.

In short therefore, academic performance at NPS is low as revealed by data. The reasons behind this is because of teacher absenteeism, qualifications, small quantity of facilities alongside

scholastic materials and no mid-day meals for teachers and pupils. In my opinion, these are the major hindrances to pupil success at the school. Enrollment though high is nonetheless a common statistic among UPE schools including those that obtain quality performance.

This chapter dealt with the dependent variable of the study which is academic performance. Accordingly two research questions raised in chapter one have been adequately handled. These were; (I) has the performance in UPE schools improved? and (II) what are the determinants of academic performance in UPE schools. Relating to question (I), two answers are generated based on this study. One answer suggests that performance in certain UPE schools like KPS is high and gradually improving while the second answer highlights that performance in some UPE schools is quite poor yet declining. The same scenario is raised under question (II) whereby the determinants of school performance have been supportive in schools like KPS but detrimental to quality education to pupils in NPS.

The next chapter will shift the attention on the independent variable; community participation. This will be done in relation to both KPS and NPS and will reflect data gathered majorly by interviews and documentary research.

## CHAPTER 5

### **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE: ANALYSIS ON MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN KANGULUMIRA C/U PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NAKAKANDWA R/C PRIMARY SCHOOL.**

Having reflected upon the dependent variable; academic performance in chapter four, I proceed to contextualize the independent variable; community participation in this chapter. This the second chapter on empirical findings and analysis. The focus here is on community participation in the two selected Schools; KPS and NPS. Just as chapter four provided answers to the research questions I and II on academic performance, this chapter shall in turn provide answers to the research questions III, IV and V. Respectively, these three objectives relate to the forms of community participation, community responsibilities and the extent of responsibility fulfillment. This chapter begins with an introduction and reminder as to what literature defines as community participation in UPE. After which is an analysis of each School in relation to the variables defined in chapter 2. These variables amount to the community responsibilities. Equally important shall be an analysis of the factors that influence the level of community involvement in both Schools. By doing so, a broad comparison may be realized between the two Schools' communities. At the end of this chapter, one should be able to conclude on what amounts to a high community participation on one hand and low community participation on the other hand. In other words, community involvement as high or low is commonly expressed in literature but often lacking a clear yardstick for determining. In short, what type of participation amounts to high or low involvement? for instance Is low participation equated to cases where no responsibilities are undertaken by the community or rather a situation where a few responsibilities are fulfilled?

#### **5.1 Introduction**

As already stated in chapter one, three of the six research questions focus on community participation. To highlight these questions; question III focuses on the forms of community involvement in UPE. Question IV focuses on the responsibilities of the identified communities in question III. Question V measures the level at which communities in both Schools undertake their responsibilities.

It must be highlighted nonetheless that chapter 2 on the literature review, provided a theoretical discussion on the forms of community participation alongside the responsibilities of these communities. This chapter therefore provides the empirical justification as to the actual experience in each of the selected Schools. In short, this chapter reveals the practical side of community involvement in Schools.

To ensure that I collected adequate data on the practicalities of community participation in KPS and NPS, I centered on Interviews with the head-teachers, parents, teachers, local council authorities, sub-county chiefs, and Secondary data in form of written minutes for previous PTA and SMC meetings held and to a lesser extent on Observations. Observations were simply made in relation to the attendance numbers at both PTA and SMC meetings.

## **5.2 Community Participation at KPS**

Community involvement at KPS comprises of the activities of two community groups already mentioned in Chapter two. These are the School Management Committee(SMC) and the Parent-Teacher Association(PTA). This information was provided to me firsthand by the School's head teacher in response to the interview question concerning what types of communities support the School's development. Equally useful were the daily observations that I undertook in June and July at the School's premises which revealed community meetings taking place at the KPS. Whenever these meetings took place, I made inquiries as to what the meetings were about. Accordingly three teachers on two separate occasions revealed that in the first meeting it was to do with the annual PTA whereas the second one was more to do with the School Management. Following these observations, inquiries and interviews, I can assert that there are two communities involved in the KPS's development.

Having mapped out the actors and forms of community participation at KPS, I proceeded with an inquiry and investigation as to what type of tasks or roles are undertaken by the School management and Parent-Teacher Association at KPS. To ensure cohesion with the literature review in chapter two, I categorized community participation on three fronts; School management, parental involvement and pedagogy. It must be reconciled that much as the PTA is an association of both parents and teachers, each of the two actors have specified roles to undertake as chapter two revealed. These roles therefore must not be underestimated when

investigating firsthand information on the practicalities of community involvement in a School. In other words, it should not be merely assumed that parents and teachers have the same responsibilities based on their membership to the PTA institution. In short, the responsibilities of the PTA at KPS applied to involvement by parents in pupil progress and the development of pedagogy by the teachers.

### **5.2.1 Participation as School Management**

This responsibility applied specifically to the School Management Committee at Kangulumira C/U Primary School. Management at KPS was therefore investigated along five fronts; policy making, leadership in Class instruction, monitoring of teachers, coordination of School policies and programs and finally the ability to mobilize resources from parents and well wishers so as to implement certain programs.

#### **(i) The Policy on Pupil Progression**

At Kangulumira Primary School, pupils advance to higher class levels based on their performance in School examinations. These examinations usually sat for at three points in School term. School term in this sense is analogous to the semesters characteristic to University education. In other words, a School term is a semester period at Primary School level. Accordingly, pupils do exams at the beginning of the term abbreviated as BOT, middle of the term abbreviated as MOT and at the end of the term abbreviated as EOT. The average or mean scores are determined in relation to a pupil's achievement across the three categories of examinations. It follows then that at KPS, a pupil who has completed a year in a particular Class level is required to obtain above 40% in all the examinations so as to be promoted to the next class. This information was obtained from each of the five teachers interviewed. More to that, the head-teacher who at the same time is the Secretary of the School management committee provided the same views on pupil promotion policy. The question that was posed to the teachers was; Are pupils in KPS promoted automatically to the next higher class? In the words of one teacher;

*"Not at all. We are aware that automatic promotion is widely practiced in many UPE Schools. But for us here, the concentration is on encouraging hard work among pupils and rewarding that hard work with promotion. The parents have been supportive to this policy of promotion based*

*on grades and this has completely transformed the pupils into responsible students, spending enough time to revise and always anticipating the good examination results."*

The question posed to the head-teacher was; what policy does your School operate on in terms of pupil progress? The head teacher in his own words stated that

*"In this School, we implemented the policy of promotion based on grades as the mechanism through which pupils may gain entry into the next higher classroom. Initially the automatic promotion policy was in place till 2002. However right from the year 2003, pupil promotion has been based on examination performance. Students who do not meet the average scores must repeat their respective class or else their parents are free to take them elsewhere. I am happy to note that I foresaw this process since I have been the head-teacher of this School from the year, 1999."*

The two sets of responses therefore revealed that promotion policy is not automatic, and that policy making in form of implementation has been done in relation to pupil progress in the School. School files that were archived in the office of one deputy-head teacher revealed the practice of promotion based on grades. In each of the files inspected, I witnessed a list of pupils' names that had been promoted from one class to another while others were made to repeat class or change the School.

#### (ii) Leadership in Class Instruction

At Kangulumira C/U Primary School the School management appears to play a vital role in the what management of classroom learning. This view was drawn from three out of the five teachers interviewed. The question put forward to each teacher was; How supportive has the School management committee been to providing a conducive learning environment.? Three teachers expressed a reply of "very supportive" where as the other two teachers simply stated that the SMC has been fairly supportive in promoting daily learning experiences.

The support of management was further emphasized by one of its members; the Sub-County chief. Accordingly, I interviewed the Sub-county chief of Kangulumira, which is the area in which KPS is located. The question put forward to him was; what is the responsibility of the SMC in regards to pupil learning? The chief(C.1) then had this to say;

*"we as the management committee of this School, have done our level best to provide the School with sufficient scholastic material and textbooks though very costly. We have supplied each respective Classroom with enough chalk to be utilized by the teachers, we have also set the timetable for everyday classroom learning alongside co-curricular activities. In addition, we created sessions where pupils especially in upper Primary such as Primary five, six and seven were asked as to how pleasing their respective teachers were to them. we wanted to know how the pupils feel in relation to each teacher's lessons. We value a system where our pupils are not simply over spoon fed with classroom notes, but they are also capable of expressing themselves freely in case of dissatisfaction. I am pleased to witness that the head-teachers, teachers and pupils have stuck to the timetables and utilized the scholastic materials available."(C.1)*

To ascertain whether the pupils were indeed asked to comment on their teachers, I interviewed five pupils. The question posed was to each pupil; Are you satisfied with each of your teachers in terms of how they teach you in Class? It is important to note however that this question was not initially posed while designing the interview guide prior to field work. The question rather arose during the data collection as the Sub-county chief expressed pupil freedom in evaluating their teachers. Therefore I had to pose a similar question to the pupils so as to note whether it was indeed operational or not. From the question posed to each pupil concerning their teachers, three out of five pupils stated that they had indeed made known their evaluations of their teachers to the head and deputy head-teachers.. The other two stated that they were yet to make a decision since they had not yet been questioned on that issue.

On a similar note, the practice of setting timetables for classroom learning revealed by the Sub-county chief was evident on the entry door of each Classroom. for instance one of the Primary seven classrooms, had a well structured timetable for lessons on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. On this timetable it was common to witness Mathematic lessons scheduled for every morning at 8:30am. What captured my attention was that on each of the timetables at the entry of Classrooms was a label 'MGT' written at the bottom of the time-table. When inquired upon it was revealed to be meaning the School management. This reflects the SMC leadership in designing the appropriate study plans for each respective classroom level.

Teachers at Kangulumira C/U Primary School are often encouraged to fulfill their duties at all times unless when ill. This was expressed by the deputy head-teacher in charge of academics. To

ensure this practice, the SMC relies on regular monitoring of the teaching staff while at the School premises. As already stated, the management of the School formulated the time-table for learning. Similarly, the 24 teachers are assigned a respective subject based on their specializations while at teacher colleges. However the deputy-head teacher in charge of academics revealed that the chairperson of the management committee often visits the School premises and observes whether there are on-going lessons in all classrooms as per the time-table. The head-teacher of KPS who is also a committee member often arrives at the School by 7:30am so as to take note of which teachers abscond from the early morning lessons scheduled at 8:30am. Similarly, it is required for every teaching staff member to acknowledge their arrival time at the School on a daily basis. This is done by writing their(teachers) signatures and time of arrival for each day. This information was evidenced in a staff records book initiated by the School management in 2010. This provides the records or rate of attendance and absenteeism by each teacher. This information was the opinion of the head-teacher. The head-teacher on noting absenteeism of a teacher, contacts that particular teacher usually by phone contact to ascertain their safety and wellbeing while seeking an explanation to the teacher's absconding from duty. The head-teacher regularly reminds teachers on the impact of absenteeism without a just cause as an activity hindering their(teachers) appraisal. Since 2010 however, absenteeism cases have not been witnessed because teachers are fully aware of the consequences relating to such practices. Most teachers at the School premises revealed that they are often motivated to gain a good appraisal from the School management in relation to their commitment towards pupil education. Thus attending to their daily duties is a prerequisite for realizing their goals.

Pupils at KPS highlighted that their teachers not only conduct their lessons daily, but that they(teachers) are good time-keepers. In the words of one Primary seven pupil(P.7.1);

*"our teachers keep time, they can never dodge teaching. When a teacher delays by a few minutes to conduct his or her lesson, many pupils think that the teacher will not be coming to teach. some students see this as an opportunity to relax and converse with each other. But they are eventually surprised when the teacher comes to teach. ....I think that the teachers are aware about how tough the headmaster and the School owners(SMC) are. This makes them to come to School every day and teach."(P.7.1)*

Supervision has therefore created a regularity in teachers conducting lessons at KPS and more importantly it has served as a mechanism to evaluate and draw appraisals of each teacher.

### (iii) Coordination of School Programs

During the field visits at KPS, I was able to identify developmental programs being worked upon in the School. This was first highlighted by the minutes of the meeting held by the School management on July 23rd, 2010. Under these minutes, the management stressed the relevance of implementing a developmental program in the School so as to ensure its sustainability and better the learning experiences or environment for latter pupils studying at KPS. One such program is known as '*Tuzimbe*' expressed in vernacular language but literally meaning *School construction*. This program was first introduced in the year 2010 as revealed by the 2010 minutes of the SMC and PTA meetings. Initially the sole aim was in creating an extensive field for sports activities, a cafeteria for meals, renovation of the dispensary(School Clinic) and providing cement for constructing more pit-latrines.

As of my field visits to KPS in 2013, I witnessed that the only aspect not yet attended to under the *Tuzimbe* program had to do with renovation of the dispensary at the School. The other three aspects appeared to have been effectively handled. This was witnessed by a large Cafeteria where pupils lined up to receive mid-day meals on a daily basis. Secondly, prior to entering the School's premises, a large play ground or field belonging to the School can be observed. This playground is estimated to be 150 meters away from the School's premises. Such specifications are provided in a report written on the *Tuzimbe* program for the year 2012. Another observation is that there are a section of pit-latrines located near lower Primary classrooms and upper Primary classrooms. Whether these latrines are enough in relation to the pupil numbers is another issue to be debated later. The head-teacher commended the parents and committee members for turning the *Tuzimbe* program into a reality and not speculation. The head-teacher expressed much appreciation to the chairpersons of both the SMC and PTA as having managed to coordinate activities, divide tasks, apportion roles in relation to the targeted goals.

### (iv) Resource Mobilization

Data on this aspect at KPS was gathered from the PTA minutes for the last two and half years, 2011 to 2012. These constitute the only available minutes at the time of field work. Importantly

as well is that my attendance in the School's PTA on August 6th 2013 enabled a confirmation of whether the SMC are participatory to School development activities that are regularly discussed in the PTA. Minutes of 2011 and 2012 reveal that the Chairperson of the SMC performed an important role in defining to parents the facilities that required their(parents) contributions. Accordingly as revealed by the PTA minutes, parents made pledges to support the facilities required, some of which were fulfilled at the end of the meetings. Of significant importance is the observation that although parents make these contributions, it is the SMC that defines the targets of these contributions. In short what are these contributions going to address? At the August 6th,2013 PTA, the SMC Chair emphasized to parents that the cause of the meeting was nothing other than the welfare of their children while at School. Accordingly, parents were requested to contribute towards the School's rising water and electricity bills as well as the Lunch for their children. The specifications of the budget for these aspects is discussed under the PTA, in the next section. This is because this budget for water, electricity and School lunch was drawn in consultation with the parents at the August 6th meeting.

### **5.2.2 Participation as Parental Involvement**

At KPS, the parents are highly involved in School development and in their children's learning experience. Thus the notion of attributing pupil learning and education to only teachers does not apply at KPS because the parents in the PTA have implemented home-based programs to aid their children even when they are not at School. Specifically, parental participation at KPS takes the form of Parent-Teacher Associations(PTA) and supervision of academic class-work of pupils.

#### (i) Parental Involvement in PTAs

At the August 6th, 2013 meeting, the attendance composition is summarized below:-

(I) Chairperson of the School Management Committee

(II) Local Council Chairperson 1(LC1)

(III) School Head Teacher (Secretary to the SMC)

(IV) Deputy Head Teacher, Academics

(V) 24 School Teachers

(VI) 93 Parents/Guardians

TOTAL 121

From the attendance composition above, it can be argued that a high parental presence in PTA ensures that a large section of the parents access information on School development that is a crucial ingredient of community empowerment. However for this to occur, the community in this case PTA should have high participation through responsibility fulfillment. An indicator of high PTA participation at KPS is the high parental attendance at 93 in the August 6th meeting. This has an implication in ensuring that matters affecting pupil learning, in this case feeding are effectively discussed as this is not an arena sidelined only to the School administration, but PTA as well. In addition, parental involvement at KPS does not stop at mere attendance but contributions to the meetings' agenda. Thus a budget and contributions were drawn at the meeting, with some parents opting to fulfill their contributions the following date, August 7th, 2013.

**Table18. The School budget drawn at KPS during the August 6th 2013, PTA**

UTILITY	Amount in Ugandan Shillings for each parent	Amount in US Dollars for each parent	Number of Parents who contributed at meeting
Electricity	3,500shs	1.37	72
Water	4,500shs	1.76	75
Lunch	5,000shs	1.97	81
TOTAL	13,000shs	5.10	

(Source: Author's Compilation from the PTA minutes)

According to the PTA Secretary this budget will ensure that the School administration maintains a conducive environment for pupil learning. This is supported however by the fact that the

parents are the ones who meet these financial responsibilities. The implication of this is that parents feel part of the School development process as they are regularly consulted and make contributions to School utilities that foster a favorable learning environment. This in turn serves as an indicator of high participation. This was similarly expressed by the Sub county Chief, Kangulumira Sub county to the question on how co-operative parents are in School development. Accordingly the chief(C.1) revealed that

*"in several Schools particularly Kangulumira C/U Primary School, parents do reflect high participation in supporting pupil feeding and have been supportive of other School programs. Parents at this school are regularly involved in planning the welfare of their pupils. When the pupils' welfare is affected, performance in the School drops....."(C.1).*

Of significant importance is the observation that parental involvement in the PTA at KPS would not be complete without a similar high teacher participation in the meeting. As evidenced at the PTA discussion, each of the 24 teachers present and attended to the parents by discussing the performance of their children in class. More importantly, I observed there were no hostile and blame-game attitudes between parents and the School teachers. The PTA was rather dominated by appreciation remarks from the teaching staff to parents while at the same time parents offering satisfaction for the efforts pursued by the School teachers in promoting the academic standard of the School.

One parent(P.1) at the PTA had this to say concerning the teaching staff;

*"i want to thank the headmaster and his teachers for transforming this School into a high performing and competitive atmosphere for pupils. I am proud to see how much knowledge my child in Primary six(P.6) has gained. My child appeared to be a slow learner, but a neighbor of mine pressurized me to take her to KPS for a successful academic journey. I have never regretted the move that i made.....my child's grades are high and i know she will get a division one grade at Primary Leaving Examinations." (P.1)*

In short during the PTA at KPS, parents and teachers are often called upon to fulfill their responsibilities for the good of their children.

(ii) Parent Supervision of Children's Class Work

The argument here is that a high supervision of School children by parents indicates high participation and fosters performance among pupils. The question that can be raised is whether this parental supervision is formal or informal? As per the Ugandan Education Act 2008, parents are charged with several responsibilities among which is the regular monitoring of their children's School work. To determine the level of parental supervision requires comparing data from the responses of the five parents and five pupils interviewed. This is in particular to the question centering on the role of parents in the daily life of their School children. Data obtained from these interviews enabled a definition of the domain of supervision. In other words what does the parental supervision target? This domain of supervision constitutes class work and pupil discipline. In monitoring the class work and promoting discipline of their children, parents at KPS are fulfilling their responsibilities stated under the UPE Hand Book, 2004. All five parents interviewed at KPS indicated that they cross check the exercise books of their children daily. The reasons this centre around ensuring that children learn regularly and that progress in class work is simply visible for an "adult" to observe . In other words, they do not experience any difficulty in doing this. Similarly each of the five pupils expressed the regular checking of exercise books daily by their parents.

Despite this participation in pupil learning, an important issue arises as to the degree to which parents are able to interpret the School work of their children so as to determine the regularity of pupil learning. In other words do the parents have the School curriculum at their disposal to cross check their children's exercise books and confirm that they are regularly progressing in terms of curriculum? No parent among the five interviewed indicated that they possessed handouts of the School curriculum. Three parents revealed that they simply checked their children's books to confirm that they had lessons for each of the four curriculum subjects. Two parents on the other hand revealed that they first questioned their children on a daily basis as to whether or not they had classes. After which they would confirm their children's responses by looking through their exercise books. 3 parents revealed that the interaction with their School children(pupils) occurs specifically while at home. In addition, the 3 parents expressed that most of the children return home from School at 5:00pm, with the parental supervision of class work beginning at 6:00pm. The venue for this interaction is at the pupils' respective residences. The manner in which this parental supervision is done involves each parent reviewing each exercise book of the child, while noting the difference between the previous day's work to ascertain that new topics or

subject matter are being introduced to the pupils. In other words is progress in terms of learning taking place or not? This was revealed by the 3 parents is through the daily monitoring of children's notebooks.

### **5.2.3 Impact of Socio-economic status of Parents & Pupils**

Out of the five parents interviewed at KPS, two were farmers, two were managing a Charcoal business and one was a nurse.. Accordingly, the parents stated a number of influences that their socio-economic status may create. Among these included:-

Time constraints to attend to their occupations while at the same time having to attend to School events when called upon. These School events include Class days wherein each class level is scheduled its own day where parents of children in each class consult with the teachers about the pupil's academic progress. As already mentioned, another School event is that of the PTA. In addition there are often annual folk plays and performances by the pupils alongside sports activities . This leads to selection dilemma as to either value occupation at the expense of School programs or value School programs at the expense of occupation.

Much as KPS is located in a semi-urban area known as Kangulumira, it should not be mistaken that all families with children in KPS then live in Kangulumira. On the contrary several families exist away from this area and yet have to meet the everyday transport costs of their children. This was hinted on by three parents during the School's Open day ceremony on 29th June. Open day is a specific date set to recognize the positive outcomes of certain developmental programs that had already been implemented in the School. They urged the School heads to bear with them if they did not show up citing transport as a major obstacle for them to regularly attend School ceremonies.

Depending on one's perceived socio-economic status, certain parents tend to be elevated over others in terms of recognition and responsibility for the School. These sentiments were expressed by one parent during the PTA meeting. She urged the School management to treat all parents in equal measure not simply based on how much contributions each renders to the School.

As already noted, the five parents interviewed were two framers, two business specialists and one nurse. Each parents reflected the same opinion as the others in relation to the level of support

offered by their earnings. They argued that given the unpredictability of their earnings since farming depends on conducive climate whereas business depends on customer preferences. Thus they concluded that often when they are called upon by the School management to fundraise for the Tuzimbe program, they lack finances because their earnings are irregular and not based on the end of a month, beginning of a month or mid month, practiced by formal occupations. In short, a parent is required to make a contribution by a due date and yet he or she cannot determine the date when his or her earnings are due.

#### **5.2.4 Participation as Pedagogy**

Teachers and parents of pupils at KPS have often agreed and implemented methodologies to improve on the learning experience and capacity of their children. As mentioned before, parents were urged to take seriously the academic work being undertaken by their children. Specifically, parents were advised during the Open-day to not only cross-check their pupil's School books but motivate their children with rewards for their performance in class work and tests.

In relation to the teachers, three types of pedagogies were initiated at KPS and for classrooms Primary seven(P.7) and Primary six(P.6). As such pupils in these classrooms were introduced to the group-work system where curriculum assignments were done in groups of four each rather than individually. According to one parent, pupils on returning home often expressed how much they fancy the group-work style. To the teachers, introducing group assignments was a way of encouraging students to revise well enough because as one teacher stated, "each group did not want to appear weak in front of others." The teachers however were quick to point out that these group assignments offer a platform for certain pupils to relax and instead leave quite a few students with a lot to do in regards to working out the correct answers for the assigned work.

Secondly, teachers have regularly exposed pupils to memorization techniques in order to avoid the common practice of cram work among students. I was able to witness such techniques when I put forward a question to the entire class of Primary five(P.5) pupils. The question in this case was; how many days does each month have? The reply was a brief and uniform answer;

*"thirty days has September, April, June and November. All the rest have thirty one except February alone."*(P.5.1)

To make matters better, the children were taught to sing out these words in a tune that most of them while singing reflected their eagerness to learn more. I had initially thought that they would spend several minutes trying to cite each month and its corresponding days. However my perception was not met.

A third pedagogy that was introduced in KPS had to do with pupil presentations in classroom and this applied to only Primary seven pupils. The head teacher stated that its always expected of teachers to conduct curriculum training for the pupils in a School. However he went on to assert that since May, 2010, pupils in Primary seven class have often been called upon to suggest formulae for curriculum assignments to others while the respective teacher intercedes incase of any misconception or inappropriate explanation made by the pupil. In other words, Mathematics classes in Primary seven feature these activities where a pupil had been selected the previous day to work out a Mathematical equation ,the following day. So the pupil is expected to be have spent the previous day revising a correct formula to the assignment. I was able to witness these scenarios during the week of July 15th to 22nd as i noted it in my dairy. Through inquires with the respective teachers of Mathematics, I was informed that these techniques are often relied on prior to the examination period for end of term(EOT). End of term simply means end of semester.

The teachers further revealed that they pursued these acts based on prior workshop training they had received in 2009 on which they were encouraged to implement unique but appropriate methods of teaching each Subject curriculum. Thus while providing this information, two teachers when inquired upon commended the School management in meeting their expenses during the "3 day workshop in 2009".

### **5.2.5 Summary on the extent of Community Participation at KPS**

Having examined the different responsibilities of the PTA and SMC at Kangulumira C/U Primary School, I draw a conclusion that communities at KPS are highly participatory. This is because teachers, parents and the management committee undertake to a large extent their responsibilities formally defined by the Ugandan Education Act, 2008. Accordingly, there is regularity in community meetings as evident of the SMC and PTA minutes of 2012, 2011 and 2010 that are kept in a School file at the Head-teacher's Office. I was able to witness the 2013

PTA meeting as already mentioned. Secondly, the School management has often expressed gratitude towards the parents acceptance to participate in the learning experience of their children. On a similar note, parents at the School often expressed appreciation to the leadership and effectiveness of the management committee towards addressing the goal of quality performance among pupils.

### **5.3 Determinants of Community Participation in Education: An explanation on the**

#### **factors influencing the level of community Involvement at KPS.**

Despite the high participation at KPS, the communities(SMC and PTA) rely on four aspects that may either promote or undermine their participation. Three of these aspects equate to the World Bank(2002) empowerment prerequisites mentioned under the conceptual framework section in chapter two. These are access to information, accountability and local organizational capacity. The other aspect is the participation cost but this is not covered under the World Bank(2002) empowerment framework. The reason as to why I adopt them as determinants of participation is because each aspect highlights prerequisites that must be made utilized by parents, teachers and School management in-order to implement their responsibilities successfully. The argument therefore is that when these aspects are undermined, responsibilities undertaken by the PTA and management committee will be minimal. In the long run, minimal responsibilities will deter regular meetings, regular policy designing and policy implementation for School development

#### **(i) Cost of Participation**

At Kangulumira C/U Primary School, parents are cautioned on PTA membership as one which is voluntary based and therefore, parents are aware that they are not coerced into the association. This issue was clarified at one of the folk ceremonies at the School on 3rd July 2013 where parents who attended in big numbers were invited to attend the scheduled PTA meeting which was to convene on August 6th 2013. Following that announcement , some of the parents expressed among themselves as to how occupied they would be on that day. Nonetheless I observed other parents who seemed to be concerned to attend the meeting as they wrote the due date and specified time in their phones while others wrote on a plain paper given to them by a

teacher. What caught my attention was the statement which one parent(P.2) expressed to the other seated beside him. He(P.2) said

*"in case you will be busy on 9th August, i will call you and inform you what has been discussed in the meeting. After all it is not compulsory for one to attend and you will not be charged for your absence. So you should go about your business on that day.....in case I do not call your phone, you may call me instead.... "(P.2).*

Such sentiments simply reflect the freedom and voluntary nature of the PTA at Kangulumira as parents are not forced to involve themselves in School developmental programs, but participation is rather based on one's choice.

One parent specified another common cost-factor that would affect his attendance in the meeting. This specification was about transport costs between his residence and the School premises. This view was highlighted at the folk ceremony held on 3rd July 2013. This parent suggested to the head-teacher and other parents attending that it would be appropriate to combine all the two events on one day instead of scheduling the ceremony and meeting on different dates. In his opinion this would limit the burden of transportation often incurred by parents living far off from the School premises.

While interviewing parents, one female parent revealed that her attendance to the PTA meeting and contributions for renovating the dispensary(School clinic) was based on the appreciation often rendered to her by the deputy head-teacher who happened to be her resident neighbor. Thus this parent felt that she was valued by the staff of KPS which inspired her to keep attending ceremonies, meetings, and fundraising for the School's facilities. This simply means that a section of parents feel a sense of esteem when given a word of thanks from the School authorities, and this in turn determines their continuity of the participation pattern. It must be noted however that this opinion simply reflects the views of one parent and should not be generalized for all parents. This is because one other parent, a male that I interviewed stressed that he often attends to his responsibilities as a PTA member but did not express any concerns for appreciation from the School management. Instead he stated that his involvement in the School meetings, events, programs and fundraising was due to the reputation achieved by KPS in academics. Thus in his view, being an active PTA member in a top performing school was

"something great to be proud of." As such, the costs of participation are unique among parents and this is why interviews were heavily relied on in order to unearth their basis or decisions for participation.

(ii) Access to information

During the 9th August 2013 PTA, I observed that among the issues on the agenda for that day was emphasis to the parents to fulfill their responsibilities as PTA members such as (I)consultation with teachers to ascertain the level of progress if any gained by their children, (II)parental supervision of children's work, (III)fundraising for the School meals of teachers alongside pupils and(IV) inquiring about the usage of funds that they contribute to the School programs. These responsibilities were highlighted by the head teacher and chairman PTA of KPS. I ensured that I wrote down this information in my diary while in attendance of the meeting.

As already mentioned under the cost of participation, one parent at the folk ceremony indicated that he would provide information and discussion points stated at the 9th August meeting to the other parents who were unable to attend this PTA.

In short therefore, through observations, it appears that the PTA members in KPS are highly informed about the tasks that should be undertaken voluntarily while maintaining up to date information drawn from the meetings.

(iii) Accountability

As a result of the regular calls for parents to make inquiries on the funds solicited, the PTA has demanded accountability from the School management authorities as to how their contributed funds were apportioned and budgeted to address the School feeding, cement for constructing latrines. In other words, without this initial information made by the head-teacher, parents and teachers belonging to the PTA would be unaware of their rights to question the usage of funds by the School management and this offers the opportunity for funds to be swindled by individuals for their own personal use as opposed to the development and education of the pupils.

The chairman of the School management committee highlighted in the School report that among achievements done by management was the orientation to the PTA members to think of

themselves as active and respectable personnel in pupil learning and not to perceive themselves as inferior to the management committee personnel. This report was obtained from the office of the Sub-County chief of Kangulumira area, which is the locality in which KPS operates. Therefore two SMC members interviewed at Kangulumira C/U Primary School commented on the PTA members as being well informed on the budget allocations to address priorities in the School.

#### (iv) Local Organizational Capacity

Meetings of the SMC and PTA are arranged separately on different dates which ensures that adequate time is spent on discussing the agenda of each meeting. The SMC at KPS comprises of five members with a chairperson and secretary. The secretary, who is also the head-teacher often writes down the minutes of their meetings and places these minutes in a file for future reference. Similarly the PTA consists of several parents and all teachers at the School and these are organized under a chairperson and secretary.

More importantly, the parents had earlier on created their own union that sought to assist parents who were unable to provide for their children the basic School needs. I was able to know this through the PTA Chairperson's speech on 9th August by which he acknowledged and recognized the parental union for a commendable job.

In short therefore, when local organization is maintained among community members, tasks are well arranged and fulfilled. When school developmental programs are proposed and implemented, it ensures that responsibilities are efficiently undertaken. This happens to be the case with Kangulumira C/U Primary School.

## **5.4 Community Participation at NPS**

Just as KPS has functional communities, NPS consists of School communities in the form of the Parent-Teacher Associations alongside the School Management Committee. However during my interviews with the parents and teachers, a section of three parents and four teachers expressed the concern that community involvement is its lowest extreme because of the conflicting exchanges between parents versus teachers. At the centre of these exchanges are notions of irresponsibility whereby parents blame teachers of not spending ample time with pupils and

instead valuing their private businesses. The teachers blame parents of being less concerned about their children's welfare such as mid-day meals while at School.

Despite these revelations, the School Management committee and Parent-Teacher Association have continued to function or operate. The extent to which they operate is measurable across the responsibilities and activities of both community groups.

It must be noted that whatever expressions or opinions that are to be presented in this section where initially spoken in Luganda, the most widely spoken language of people in Kayunga District. Thus using the two tape recorders, i would capture all the necessary views, and later on re-write these opinions in English as they are to be presented here.

#### **5.4.1 School Management at NPS**

To begin with is the SMC which occupies the dominant position in the School as managers with duties in particular; policy making, planning and implementation . During the field visits to the School, i was able to observe and access documents relating to pupil progression, program design and coordination, leadership in classroom learning and mobilization of resources.

##### **(i) Policy on Pupil Progression**

In terms of pupils advancing from a lower to higher class level, the policy of automatic promotion takes centre stage and has been in place since the year 2000(Document from head teacher, July 2013).

Although allowing pupils to advance to each a preceding higher class would be cheered by democratic notions of 'self-determination,' it however poses a risk to any prospects of improved performance at the School. This is because under the automatic promotion, several pupils advance to a preceding class without basic knowledge of the curriculum topics in the former class. Thus pupils encounter challenges in understanding current curriculum topics in the class they are promoted to because of a gap in previous knowledge from lower classes. What is more striking at NPS is that several pupils at NPS are unable to register their initials(names) correctly on the examination scripts. As the head teacher(H.T.2) revealed during the interview

*"several pupils in Primary seven are unable to even write their names on the exam papers. Where they are asked to write the name of their School, they write their teacher's name. Where it indicates to write their names, they write their parent's names. And these are the pupils who are expected to seat for Primary Leaving Examinations in November..... This automatic promotion is not supporting quality learning and definitely undermining performance. I have suggested that we drop this policy, but the School Management Committee and parents do not offer the same logic, thus we have to carry on with it."(H.T.2)*

It can therefore be concluded that the automatic promotion policy is detrimental to any prospects of moderate performance.

(ii) Coordination of Programs

Programs have been designed to address one major problem at NPS. The problem concerns the feeding of teachers and pupils with lunch, what is termed as "mid-day meals." Two programs have been designed at the School to address the issue and parents were asked to select their own program that they identify with. In one program, parents were asked to contribute a quantity of food stuffs from their garden most especially beans and posh flour that would be used by the School to provide meals for the teachers and pupils. The second program was to contribute an amount of money equating to 3000Ugandan shillings(1 dollar) each and this was to be done only once per School term, usually at the beginning of the School term. Despite formulating these programs, the coordination by the SMC was lacking. This is because the management committee was not consistent in its follow-up and as such there emerged no records of which parents provided support in each respective program. More importantly, the collection of the contributions whether in money form or food stuffs was undermined by the inconsistent decisions by parents and the SMC Treasurer who was in charge of collecting the funds. One such decision concerned the parents of NPS. One parent(P.3) revealed during the interview that

*" at times, the treasurer does not collect the money when we have it because she is busy with her personal businesses. So in that situation, i have to keep the money, but i end up using it to buy needs at home, so then i lack the money. And when the Treasurer emerges, I have to borrow money from a neighbor so as to have my child receive meals. But i still incur a debt." (P.3)*

However, the SMC Chairperson(SMC.1) had this to say,

*"several parents at this School promise to make their payments on a scheduled date. I use my own transport to go to their respective homes or workplaces on each specified date. But instead they state how they do not have the money at that time and state that they will send me the money on my mobile phone through mobile-money services. Therefore i decide to go to parents' residences or workplaces on my own time. In short if one told me to come and receive the money on 7th July, i will go on 9th July."(SMC.1)*

These two statements from a parent and SMC Treasurer simply indicate the coordination problem existent at NPS.

### (iii) Leadership in Class Instruction

In terms of monitoring teachers, the existence of rampant absenteeism at NPS suggests a low level of SMC supervision at the school. The Head teacher confirmed an absence of regular visitation at the school by the SMC Chairperson and suggested that the teachers at NPS are therefore not under any commitment to teach since they are not being supervised by an authority from the SMC. On the other hand, the SMC Chair during an interview revealed that he meets some of the teachers at their homes since they live in a nearby neighborhood to his and he is therefore able to discuss with them any School matters. This according to the Chair of the SMC is what explains his irregular visitation to the School premises, but he as well reflected that he appears at the School premises during PTA meetings. In as much as the SMC Chairperson meets NPS teachers at their homes, these meetings are inadequate to prevent or curb the absenteeism problem at the School premises. This is because the teachers have become accustomed to not being supervised hence late coming to School and irregular teaching duties have occurred resulting into stagnation in curriculum progress.

### (iv) Resource Mobilization

As already indicated under KPS, resource mobilization is a responsibility of the SMC. To begin with, a review of the PTA minutes from 2010 to 2012 indicates that issues raised at that time like School lunch for teachers and pupils are still existing. This was confirmed in my attendance of the July 24th,2013 PTA meeting were issues raised included School lunch and provision of scholastic material(exercise books, text books and mathematical sets) were raised. Thus

comparing the agenda of the July 24th, 2013 meeting to previous ones(2010-2012) reveals unsolved problems.

At the meeting the SMC Chairperson was present but rather did not necessarily take the role of defining the agenda and budgeting structure of items requiring parental support. Rather this role was done by the Head teacher who is also the Secretary to the SMC. However it was quite common to witness some parents express their concern over the SMC's activeness towards NPS. One parent(P.4) for instance raised her concern during the meeting has this to say

*"the School Management Committee personnel do not regularly remind us of our role as contributors to our school. More to that, the School Committee need to supply each parent with at least a document specifying what progress has been made since the last two years in regards to the resources contributed and issues raised. As far as i can see, every year we are discussing the same issues. My request to the SMC Chairperson is to do a weekly mobilization process since we live in nearby homes."*(P.4)

Similarly another parent (P.5) at the meeting had this to say,

*"However much or little we contribute to issues affecting our children's learning, we deserve an accountability process of how the funds were used to try to address the ongoing problems. for instance i contributed towards the School lunch at the beginning of this School term , but up to today i am still being asked the same contribution fee."*(P.5)

These two views were not from my interviews with the parents at NPS but where rather opinions expressed on the PTA meeting and these opinions were made known to everyone attending, not only me. However before I proceeded to interpret the local language(Luganda) into English, I requested the two parents whether I could use their opinions for my academic research and i maintained how confidential this information would be kept. Accordingly, my request was honored.

From the these two expressions from the parents at the meeting, it can be drawn that resource mobilization and accountability are not roles effectively performed by the SMC. Thus community participation in this regard is seen as low. This is a scenario different from the KPS

setting where financial and resource mobilization by the School committee appeared to have been consistently undertaking its responsibilities.

The two expressions by the parents at the PTA had been earlier mentioned on the 30th June, 2013 during the interviews with parents of NPS. One parent while assessing the performance of the School management committee claimed that as a parent, her alongside other parents at NPS are rarely told details of the SMC meetings. She went on to state that most parents do not regularly receive information from the management members and this forces the parents to trek distance to the School and meet the SMC Secretary who is the Head-teacher. It is important to note however that these meetings with the head-teacher are irregular and unplanned for.

From the three expressions from the parents at the meeting, it can be drawn that resource mobilization and accountability are not roles effectively performed by the SMC. Thus community participation in this regard is seen as low. This is a scenario different from the KPS setting where financial and resource mobilization by the School committee appeared to have been consistently undertaking its responsibilities.

#### **5.4.2 (I) Parental involvement the PTA at NPS .**

At the 24th July 2013 meeting, the composition of attendants constituted of:

(I) PTA Chairperson

(II) SMC Chairperson

(III) Local Council 1 Chairperson

(IV) Head Teacher

(V) Deputy Head teacher

(VI) 10 Teachers

Total: 48 people attended.

This number was confirmed towards the end of the PTA meeting.

The PTA meeting was an open discussion relating to issues of the parents' non-involvement in the School feeding policy for teachers and pupils. After which was a discussion on teacher absenteeism. It caught my attention however that nothing was mentioned in relation to scholastic materials for learning purposes. Through observations and interviews with the pupils, I witnessed that all the Classrooms lack enough chalk, duster, and a well structured blackboard for teaching purposes. It must be noted however that despite the engaging discussion on the agenda, the 33 parents that attended the meeting do not account for or represent the entire body of parents with children in the School. As one parent(P.6) lamented after the meeting

*"the number of parents appearing for this meeting is declining, last year we were far more than in this year's meeting . I think other parents are dissatisfied with the PTA, nonetheless our children are studying in this School and therefore we must still attend these meetings."*(P.6)

What is of further interest is that despite a participation in these meetings through discussions on School matters, these discussions however tend to take on a blame game style. In other words during the meeting it was quite common to witness parents blaming teachers over not valuing their children's education by absconding from duty. On the other hand the teachers blame parents as being reluctant and un-co-operative in providing regular School lunch for teachers and pupils while at School. The result of this is a stalemate in deciding developmental matters for NPS. Rather the discussions are an avenue or stage where accusations are expressed without drawing solutions to the agenda of the day. In short the PTA meeting agenda drifted into a parent-teacher exchange and as a result there was no proposed budget drawn to support the issues raised at the start of the meeting. Rather the Chairperson of the PTA suggested to the parents that they can contribute any amount of funds possible, with a reminder that it was in the interest of their children's learning.

#### (ii) Parental Supervision of Children

Each of the 5 parents interviewed on 30th June, 2013 at NPS expressed their involvement in ensuring that their children attend School once they left home. This according to each parent interviewed was by communicating through mobile-phone calls to the Head teacher and her Deputy to confirm that their children are in class. Once they received the feedback that their children are in class, the parents are able to go about their work. However as I had previously

undertaken interviews with the head-teacher on 21st June, she revealed that since she was newly appointed in the School in January 2013, she had not yet identified fully each child's parent or each parent's child while at School. This raises questions as to what the parents claimed that they contact the head-teacher to confirm their children's arrival at the School premises. Nonetheless one female parent interviewed who at the same time is a treasurer of the SMC revealed that the deputy head-teacher is more responsive and has served that School since 2003. She went on to conclude that such concerns of monitoring children are best handled by the deputy-head teacher only.

Despite this level of supervision by parents, only two parents mentioned the supervision of their children's exercise books to confirm that they had been taught at school. More specifically, one parent(P.7) emphasized this point;

*"I think I maybe the only parent who crosschecks the note books of my children, because other parents whom i observe daily in the neighborhood simply go about their businesses the whole day for instance its common to see a man(husband) going to sell fish in the nearest trading centre on just a bicycle. Then the woman(wife) has stayed at home but goes into the gardens to plant, yield, manure and harvest food and may spend many hours there. I see when children come to their homes, they normally change their uniforms and ran and play in their compounds until late evening like 7:00pm. This is the same time when their father is back from his business. then how can such parents have time for checking work."(P.7)*

The other three parents interviewed reflected no involvement in such matters relating to pupil class work. Rather they consider whatever goes on at the School premises to be a matter of teacher concern and not theirs(parents). This view however contradicts the earlier expression by parents in the 24th July PTA meeting as defining the teachers' roles as inactive in conducting lessons. In other wards it raises the question as to how a parent that does not check his child's work can at the same time hold a teacher as unaccountable to teaching. As the parents indicated their lack of concern in cross checking their pupil's work, then it raises interest as to how they are able to determine the teacher ineffectiveness at NPS.

The five pupils that I interviewed indicated that after School, they simply played with their neighboring friends until late evening when they took dinner. There was no mention by any pupil

as to whether their parents crosschecked their notebooks. Two pupils even revealed as to how they do not have any notebooks to write class exercises because their parents are unable to buy them.

### **5.4.3 Influence of Socio-economic status of Parents and Pupils**

The occupations of each of the five parents interviewed were; one was a treasurer of the School management committee while all the others were farmers rearing livestock and growing food crops.

The parents interviewed revealed that in their opinion, Universal Primary education(UPE) was for all pupils and would cover all the costs of learning and School feeding. Their concern was they are unable to meet the expenses set for the School feeding program. More to that two parents expressed concerns that they have four children in different class levels at NPS, therefore they are unable to meet all the needs of all children, most notably notebooks, colored pencils and Mathematical sets for Mathematics curriculum. In the opinion of one(P.8), they would simply keep interchanging,

*"in each School term, we try and support one child, then the three others have to suffer without much needs,....then we change and support one by one of the three children and then another and finally until all have been exposed to a few needs. But this practice certainly weakens the others academically and they often lose interest."*(P.8)

This simply reveals that where the socio-economic statuses of parents are informal based, then the incomes or earnings will be unknown or uncertain and this in turn will limit support towards the pupils' elementary training.

### **5.4.4 Pedagogical Aspect at NPS**

Concerning this aspect, there was hardly any mention of pedagogical activities at NPS. This can be drawn from the head-teacher's expression that NPS like most other UPE Schools relies on automatic pupil promotion of their pupils. Therefore whether pupils cannot read or write well, is not to be considered. As already indicated under section 5.4.1 on promotion policy, the head-teacher stressed the reality of the pupils' incapacity. More importantly during the interview with the head-teacher, handed me answer sheets of examinations that had been done in the mid of the

School term. These answer sheets from my observation, were for Primary seven(P.7) pupils. I was able to confirm what the head-teacher stated regarding nearly three quarters of the students could not write their own names well, as well the name of their School properly on the front page of the scripts. Thus as the head-teacher noted, pedagogy would be suitable for Schools where quality performance is being sought. As she stated in her own words "this is not the case with most Schools in Kayunga District such as NPS."

The teachers interviewed on this matter expressed that they require regular training and workshops that would equip them with pedagogical methods and skills. They nonetheless expressed the same opinion of the head-teacher, in terms of the low quality and automatic promotion policy of most UPE Schools like NPS. Nonetheless each teacher interviewed revealed that they underwent basic pedagogical training while at teacher training colleges. In the view of one teacher, "other School matters such as responsible management and parental support need to be undertaken first so as to better the teachers' and pupils' moral, and only then **will pedagogy be effective.**"

### **5.5 Summary on the extent of Community Involvement at NPS**

Having discussed these different levels of community participation in relation to Nakakandwa R/C Primary School(NPS) it can be concluded that the responsibilities of the School management and that of the PTA are hardly fulfilled or realized. In my opinion, i consider the participation of the SMC and PTA communities as being low. It is from this statement that i found it necessary to analyze what hindrances are encountered by the communities at NPS.

**These are presented in terms of cots, information, accountability and organization.**

### **5.6 An Explanation into the factors supporting or constraining Community Participation at Nakakandwa R/C Primary School(NPS).**

This section concludes the discussion on community involvement at NPS by analyzing the issues most that the World Bank(2002) considers as pre-requisites to empower communities for effective participation.

### **5.6.1 Participation Costs at NPS**

At the School's premises, it is common to witness several pupils walking a distance of 2 miles on their way to School in the morning and back to home in the evening. Thus it appears quite cumbersome for their parents to trek the same distances so as to attend the PTA. Through observation, none of the parents at the PTA were transported to the School by vehicle, rather most of them had bicycles that were often worn out. As already noted, there are those pupils who have homes in the neighborhood to the School and through observation i was able to witness that nearly three quarters of the attendants were residing close to the School. Thus to such families, the transport problem is minimized. However even where families live close enough to the School, there remains no guarantee that they would attend such meetings. This is because as earlier stated, most parents on a daily basis go about their work whether formal or informal. Therefore it is more conclusive to say that their attendance in PTA depends on their work load.

### **5.6.2 Information Access at NPS**

Community members at NPS are lacking knowledge and information relating to vital aspects. To begin with are the community responsibilities. Each community group whether the SMC or PTA have a number of duties to perform, as indicated in chapter two. These include supervision, budgeting, parental involvement and teacher attendance . On the contrary such responsibilities are hardly realized in their practical sense at Nakakandwa Primary School. As one parent already highlighted during the PTA that they lack any regular reminder about their contributions towards the School feeding program.

### **5.6.3 Accountability**

Without much knowledge about their responsibilities, rights and privileges, parents at NPS did not often express concern on the outcomes of School programs implemented, if any. This means that they were unaware of their capacity to demand for accountability from the School management as to what programs are being formulated to better the development of the School. This in turn results into the School management committee being silent to the PTA in relation to School related developments, School related budgets and School planning. This is because of the SMC awareness that the PTA rarely question the plans, programs or decisions undertaken.

#### **5.6.4 Local Organizational Capacity**

Unlike KPS where the parents created a union for themselves, at NPS such attempts are non-existent. The parents at NPS relate together only in cases of PTA meetings. However it is crucial to note that even within the PTA, organization capacity is hardly achieved. Scheduled dates for meetings are not regularly communicated to all parents by the PTA Chairperson. During the PTA, teachers and parents are locked in conflict over responsibility fulfillment. Thus as already indicated blame-game takes centre stage and this definitely fragments the PTA community at NPS because its members are disunited in addressing the common goal of; contributing towards School progress and quality learning of pupils.

#### **5.6.5 Summary on Participation at KPS & NPS**

At KPS, the School management committee and Parent-Teacher Association appear to fulfill their responsibilities that are defined under the Ugandan Education Act of 2008. The SMC often reminds parents and teachers about incoming School programs or policies that necessitate their(PTA) contribution. Meetings under the SMC are regularly held and information from these meetings reaches all teachers and a majority of parents who in-turn pass on the information to fellow parents not in attendance. The supply of information and accountability to parents and teachers in my opinion are the dominant aspects achieved by the SMC at KPS. Concerning the PTA, meetings are consistently held with new usually new agendas. In my opinion, the Organizational capacity of the PTA stands out as the most relevant aspect undertaken at KPS because parents, who are also PTA members have supported each other in as far as providing scholastic needs for pupils whose parents are cannot afford these expenses.

Concerning NPS, the SMC falls short of its accountability responsibility. Secondly, the agenda of the School committee meetings tend to be unresolved and this stagnates the prospect of initiating other developmental agendas at the School. Thirdly, supervision of teachers at NPS is not effective enough and in one way provides leeway for teachers at the School to maintain their absenteeism. In my opinion, supervision of teachers is the major shortcoming of the SMC that I observed and realized through interviews. For the PTA, information inaccessibility is in my opinion the greatest shortcoming realized. This in turn has led to unawareness by parents on their right to demand accountability from the management committee as to policy making, budgeting and resource allocation. In terms of responsibility, the PTA members in my opinion

fall short most especially among aspects of parental supervision of pupils and parental contribution towards School feeding program.

This chapter sought to indicate the practical undertakings of communities at each respective School; KPS and NPS. This has been achieved. More importantly was the need to determine or measure the magnitude of participation within each School as either high or low. In so doing, the research question (V) on the extent of community participation was adequately discussed. The findings and analysis in this chapter provide background for explaining how community activities effect high or low academic performance. This is to be addressed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### **THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: ANALYSIS OF KANGULUMIRA C/U PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NAKAKANDWA R/C PRIMARY SCHOOL.**

Having presented the empirical data and analysis on both academic performance and community participation, this is the final analysis chapter that links the two previous chapters( four and five) in an attempt to explain the impact of the SMC and PTA on pupil academic performance. In doing so, it shall provide adequate discussion on the research question(VI) that sought to explain the impact of community participation on School performance.

To ensure that this objective is met, I discuss each community group single handedly in relation to both Schools ; KPS and NPS. To begin with shall be the impact of the School Management Committee(SMC) on pupil performance at Kangulumira and Nakakandwa Primary Schools.

#### **6.1 SMC Impact on Pupil Performance: Analysis on KPS and NPS.**

The responsibilities undertaken by the School management committees at Kangulumira Primary School and Nakakandwa Primary School have impacted in the following way on pupil performance:

(i) The policy making towards pupil advancement at both Schools has offered mixed returns. At KPS, the strategy taken by management was of a promotion based on pupil performance in class. This ensures that pupils and their parents take seriously education and attainment of above average scores in School examinations or else face the prospect of repeating class. This in turn is a motivator for hard work and revision among pupils. With such revision, pupils become knowledgeable to handle curriculum related examinations.

On the contrary at NPS, the policy pursued is one of automatic promotion and this has provided no motivation for pupils to take education seriously alongside their parents. This is because of the awareness among pupils and parents that they(pupils) simply have to attend School, their performance in School assessments does not count on their promotion. Thus a student in NPS may ask the question; Why should i read? Without such motivation, teachers in turn do not

labor to meet pupils' learning needs. This leaves pupils with no relevant curriculum knowledge that is crucial for their eventual assessment(PLE).

(ii) Leadership in class instruction at both KPS and NPS has offered different outcomes in relation to performance. At KPS, school management has enabled effective teaching on a weekday basis. Cases of absenteeism are non-existent. This enables the academic curriculum to be effectively tackled in all relevant topics. In turn, students are able to inquire on their misunderstandings across particular topics. All this makes pupils well-prepared for assessments. More importantly, the class facilities have enabled a comfortable learning in classrooms while at the same-time enabling teachers to demonstrate adequately certain solutions on the blackboard. These facilities are delivered to each School but dependent on the needs. This means that the SMC must communicate to the District Education office(DEO) concerning such facilities. As already hinted, one such facility are the drawing instruments like Mathematical rulers, Protractors, Dividers for each class level that are reliably used in conducting Mathematics lessons. This has provided the pupils at KPS with hands-on skills whereby they learn new Mathematical skills while observing their teacher's demonstrations in the Classroom.

At NPS, teacher absenteeism has consistently occurred to a high extent and the management have been unable to address this issue. Management at the School was unable to effectively monitor teachers at School and this provided the basis of growing absenteeism. Pupils hardly receive education, and this leads to large gaps in curriculum that are unattended to. Without knowledge on such curriculum, pupils can by no means achieve good scores in examinations. The facilities at NPS have not adequately supported the high numbers of pupils and this has created an in-conducive classroom for learning purposes. This is because students in such overcrowded and poor furniture classrooms will not find lessons as pleasurable but rather an uncomfortable experience. This is the reason why most pupils at the School opt to seat outside the classes or dodge classes. All this leaves pupils with hardly any knowledge and interest in curriculum learning. This disinterest is in turn exposed on the examination scripts.

(iii) Resource Mobilization at KPS has contributed to the better welfare of pupils while at School. These resources were the food stuffs for teachers and pupils to be fed on, the construction of several usable School latrines and the regular access to water and electricity services. All these factors create a healthy and energetic environment which has enabled pupils

at the School to study regularly in good health and with proper sanitation. This is a pre-requisite for a pupil to study well and revise regularly . This is the scenario at KPS.

Concerning NPS, resources to address pupil welfare have hardly been mobilized. Therefore pupils have no lunch at School and yet they are expected to study or attend class. The SMC Treasurer was unable to collect would be funds from parents because of the burden of transport costs incurred in moving to each and every home. Thus no programs like the School lunch were implemented. Instead pupils have in turn take their own responsibility to meander around the School gardens in search for edible fruits from the trees within the School premises. This means that class attendance and learning is undermined and in turn this is realized in pupils' assessments where several pupils may not a single sentence in English language.

Having explained the manner in which the School management committees of KPS and NPS impact on the performance of pupils, I proceed to explain the impact of the parent-teacher associations on each School's performance.

## **6.2 PTA Impact on Pupil Achievement : Analysis on KPS and NPS.**

The PTA at KPS has been supportive in improving on the level of School facilities available at KPS. These have been provided for in two ways; firstly from the contribution of funds during the PTA meetings and secondly, the self created parental union that mobilizes funds among parents to support other parents provide the necessary scholastic needs for their children. This has ensured that a majority of pupils access scholastic materials and inequality is undermined in the Classroom.

During the PTA meetings at NPS, parents regularly appear in these meetings. However these meetings have simply been conflict zones. This means that matters relating to promoting quality learning in the School are offset by parent-teacher accusations that would be relevant if resolved. On the contrary these are unresolved accusations that are transformed into the classroom. Teachers do not attach much importance to educating the pupils on the basis that the pupils' parents do not offer them lunch meals. It should be noted that all these exchanges between PTA members impact on the pupil learning, what i term as "classroom." Without fully learning the curriculum , pupils' performance in examinations is undermined.

Parents at KPS undertake the responsibility in cross-checking their children's class-work which provides motivation for their children. The children are motivated not only in attending class but also in passing written home-work since they are aware that their parents will be checking their notebooks the next day. This therefore enables pupils at KPS to work towards passing assignments and in turn examinations.

At NPS, the majority of parents do not embrace the idea of cross-checking pupils' notebooks. This means that pupils at NPS are tempted to absent themselves from the classes undertaken on a particular day with the awareness that their parents do not inspect their notebooks. Such scenarios have made pupils devalue their education and often may express themselves as "being forced to School." However such statements are derived from the negligence on the part of their parents towards their children's education.

The pedagogies initiated at KPS have enabled pupils acquire self-confidence, an essential trait for realizing performance at all levels. Pupils are made to discuss solutions to curriculum related questions. This means that pupils revise regularly in-time for their classroom presentations. On the contrary, the inadequate learning at NPS does not allow for introducing such mechanisms.

### **6.3 Summary on the impact of community participation on academic performance.**

Community participation whether high or low will have implications on the performance of pupils in Schools. This is because when communities are active, then provision is made for School facilities and scholastic needs. Equally relevant is that teacher absenteeism is lowered when School management is effective as opposed to when the management is inactive.

In the case of Uganda, the Education Act of 2008 defines the responsibilities of each community. Important to note is that these responsibilities defined relate to relevant aspects for pupil performance. These are teacher attendance, scholastic materials, School facilities, feeding, health and sanitation. In other words these are issues that communities close to each School are best suited to handle.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION CHAPTER

#### 7.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this research was to explain the impact of community participation on academic performance of pupils in the setting of Universal Primary Education in Uganda.

Within the context of Primary education, the specific research questions were:

- (I) Has the academic performance in UPE Schools improved?
- (II) What determinants influence the level of academic performance in UPE Schools?
- (III) What are the forms of community participation that operate in UPE?
- (IV) What are the responsibilities of School Management Committees(SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations(PTAs)?
- (V) To what extent do the SMCs and PTAs fulfill their responsibilities?
- (VI) What is the impact of SMC and PTA participation on Academic Performance?

This section will revisit the research questions, summarize the findings of this research and offer conclusions based on the findings. Recommendations for future research will be discussed in terms of how to progress this study. Importantly the contribution of this research to community participation in education will be clarified. Additionally, a section reflecting on the research process undertaken for this study is included. By adopting this structure it is intended that the research work will be concluded so as to reflect on whether or not the research objective and research questions of this study have been met, including a consideration of the value of this research. Guidance will be offered as to how this study can be progressed.

#### 7.2 Research Questions: Summary of Findings and Conclusions

This section will summarize the main findings in relation to the research questions initiated in chapter one. These different questions altogether formed the basis of the study aimed at explaining the impact of community participation on academic performance. I present the

summary of findings in relation to each research question in a chronological order beginning with question(I), (II), (III), (IV), (V) and (VI).

Research Question (I): Has Academic Performance improved?

The literature review in chapter two revealed that the academic performance among UPE Schools in Uganda since 1997 has experienced mixed results. These include Schools that have maintained and improved in their performance on one hand. On the other hand are the Schools that have continued to display below average results, most notably at the Primary Leaving Examinations. In practice as was revealed by the two Schools studied; KPS and NPS, different Schools have experienced mixed fortunes in realizing improved performances. KPS has registered improved academic performance as data indicated whereas NPS already with poor performance is on a decline.

The main conclusion and lesson that can be drawn from the levels academic performance in Ugandan UPE schools is that these schools differ in their performances. Despite being UPE schools, KPS and NPS have over a decade registered opposite ends in terms of pupil success. This reality is essential in minimizing distorted perceptions among some UPE commentators that quality education in UPE is non-attainable. However as data revealed pupil achievement was attainable in the case of KPS. In other words each UPE school requires adequate investigation to ascertain its level of performance. Such investigations should incorporate not only Primary Leaving Examinations but as well as school based exams for pupils in classes below Primary seven.

Research Question (II): Determinants of academic performance in UPE.

Data gathered from literature revealed a number of factors that influence the level of performance in UPE Schools. These were teacher availability and qualifications, pupil enrollment levels, School facilities and level of community involvement. In practice, these issues appear to be relevant in bridging the gap between well-performing Schools and their declining counterparts. What was essential during field data collection was that Schools though UPE, divert in as far as each of the mentioned determinants. This was the case with KPS and NPS Schools.

Of great significance was that among the determinants labeled, this study selected community participation as the most relevant determinant to School performance and this explains its centrality in this study. Nonetheless each of the other determinants were examined during field visits to KPS and NPS.

Research Question (III): Forms of Community Participation in UPE.

Data gained from literature review confirmed the existence of two community groups in relation to UPE in Uganda and these are the School management Committee and Parent-Teacher association. The assumption under literature was that each UPE School in Uganda has got SMC and PTA communities. In practice, this was clarified while in the field, as both KPS and NPS have functional School committees and Parent-Teacher associations respectively. Therefore the conclusion from this research question is that community participation is indeed functional in Ugandan UPE Schools as was the case with KPS and NPS.

Research Question(IV): Responsibilities of SMC and PTA communities.

This question relied like the previous three on both literature review data and field data to confirm with literature. Literature indicated that the SMC and PTA communities have separate responsibilities as defined by Scholars, and at a more specific level in Uganda. The conclusion obtained from this was that despite the uniform label of community, the SMC and PTA occupy distinct but relevant roles that matter for School development and performance.

The SMC responsibilities were concluded to be managerial ones whereas for the PTA, responsibilities were more of consultative and resource contribution. The conclusion obtained from field data was that not all communities are aware or informed about all their roles. As the case revealed, SMC members and a section of PTA members at NPS were uninformed about certain roles that they occupy as defined by the Education Act, 2008.

Research Question(V): Responsibility fulfillment by the SMC and PTA.

This question was best handled with the data from fieldwork. Data in this case centered on investigating the community responsibilities in each school. The main finding in this question was that communities in different UPE schools score differently in terms of fulfilling their respective duties. Therefore in some schools such as KPS, the SMC and PTA are actively

involved in school development and planning. On the other hand, in some schools like NPS the SMC and PTA were hardly knowledgeable of their formal responsibilities in management, parental involvement and pedagogy thus making their participation very low.

Another major finding in this question revolved around the determinants of participation in both KPS and NPS. In other words, it was realized that there are four features that influenced the degree to which community responsibilities were fulfilled. These were; participation costs, information access, accountability and local organizational capacity. As a result, a major finding revealed was that communities(SMC & PTA) at KPS were empowered because they were able to score highly on each of the above determinants of participation. On the contrary, communities at NPS fall short of meeting these determinants, with the end result being that communities at NPS are disempowered.

The major conclusion in this question was that community participation is high at KPS, but low at NPS. This conclusion was reached depending on the level of responsibility fulfillment undertaken by the communities for each respective School.

Research Question(VI): Impact of Community Participation on Academic performance

The main finding here was that community participation has an impact on pupil performance. In the case of KPS, high participation has ensured that a number of School facilities are provided for to the School and pupils respectively. The School management has monitored the teachers and this has eliminated absenteeism by teachers. On the other hand, communities at NPS have not been supportive to quality learning and this in turn has led to low grades among pupils.

The main argument and finding in this question was that, community responsibilities address relevant aspects that build a conducive learning experience for the teachers and pupils. This means that where the responsibilities are largely undertaken, then a suitable environment for teacher-pupil interaction takes place and pupils are destined to obtain quality grades or at least grades above average.

### **7.3 Contributions to Knowledge**

This research has contributed knowledge in two main areas; community participation theory and empirical data.

In relation to theory, it was often stated during this study that community participation in education is an area without sufficient research in sub-Saharan Africa. Uganda is part of sub-Saharan Africa. The review of literature made it clear that community participation is fragmented in the education systems in the developing world and that there is an acute lack of in-depth research as already mentioned. Firstly, the literature review provided a critical discussion of community participation theories and formal institutions of governance applicable to Universal Primary education. Therefore knowledge gained from this literature can inform debate on the formalities that can be undertaken to establish functional communities that will be actively involved in the development of Schools.

Empirically, the data gained from field visits, provides a further critique on already existing academic Theses published at the Department of Administration and Organization Theory, University of Bergen, Norway. Two studies by Fushieni(2005) on *Community Participation in Basic School Performance* and Masue(2010) on the *Empowerment of School Committees* provided a background to this study. Both studies employed the exploratory case study whereas this study implemented the explanatory case study. This study employed three World Bank(2002) empowerment perspectives, that are utilized by Masue(2010). What is important to note is that these empowerment perspectives were utilized in this research to identify the factors influencing effective community involvement in both Schools. This is unique considering that Masue's(2010) study centered on School committees. This study has focused on School committees, Parent-Teacher associations and pupil performance.

## **7.4 Recommendations**

Throughout this research, the relevance of communities to School performance has been emphasized on. The communities in this study were the School Management committees(SMC) and Parent-Teacher Associations(PTA). Having discussed and explained their responsibility and impact on School performance, I recommend two further research related areas.

One area would be centering on determining which of the two community groups is more relevant to School development and performance so as to avoid false generalizations that the SMC is more relevant than PTA or vice versa. To do this would enable policymakers know where to adjust or strengthen in terms of responsibilities afforded to each group. The second

area of research that I recommend concerns determining or exploring the basis that drives the different community members. In other words, are SMC and PTA members driven by the urge to better their School's performance and development OR they it is a matter of formality. This would provide clues that limit false generalization.

## **7.5 Self-reflection**

The first piece of advice for future research students is that they should select a topic that they have high interest in investigating on and that is also lacking in scope. By lacking in scope, I mean that the topic has not previously been debated on rigorously by scholars and has not been subjected to numerous research. To determine whether a topic is lacking in scope, I recommend researchers to read widely different available texts around that topic. Then from reading widely, one may realize that the topic has been subjected to empirical inquiries in some regions of the globe as opposed to others. for instance as the case was in this study; community participation is an area lacking in research in sub-Saharan Africa. This may then form the basis of conducting a study.

The second piece of advice to future research students is that while writing their methodology chapter, ensure that they are as practical as possible and avoid generalized statements. A majority of what is written in this chapter should reflect on what was undertaken or done in the field. In other words, the theoretical literature should be limited.

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## **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

I am Francis Kisembo, a Ugandan, studying at the University of Bergen, Norway. I am currently pursuing my research on a topic called the Impact of Community Participation on academic Performance in your District.

As part of my research, I need to ask a section of people of few questions of relevance to my study. I shall maintain the confidentiality of information provided to me.

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO CHIEF/DEPUTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (CAO)**

- For how long have you occupied this position?
- What are your responsibilities?
- How do you rate performance in the District?
- Are the school communities in Kayunga district vibrant?
- What challenges do you view as hindering performance of UPE schools in Kayunga District?
- How is the rate of teacher absenteeism among schools in this district?
- Are the school communities accountable to you or to the sub country chiefs?

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

- What duration have you been a teacher in two schools?
- What subjects do you specialize in teaching?
- What are the challenges that you encounter in your carrier?
- Are the school committees supportive to your needs?
- Are the parents collaborative to your needs?
- In your opinion, what do you regard as the most challenging issue in your school?
- How are you able to prepare your pupils for curriculum and co-curricular training?
- Are you familiar with your responsibilities as a PTA member? If so what are they?

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS**

- For how long have you been a parent in this school?
- What is your perception about school committee management?
- How involved are you in the education of your child.

- Do you regularly attend PTA meetings? If so what agenda normally features in these meetings?
- What do you consider in your opinion as the challenging issues that need intervention in this school?
- What is your occupation?
- Does your occupation support or hinder your attendance in school events?
- How do you rate the teachers in this school? And why?

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO HEAD TEACHER**

- For how long have you occupied this position in this school?
- As the SMS secretary, how supportive has the SMC been to your school?
- How effective is the PTA towards school development.
- What issues in your opinion require immediate attention to be attended to?
- What explains the academic performance in your school?

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO PUPILS**

- Which class do you attend?
- How many subjects do you study?