

TEACHER'S INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING AND PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SOROTI DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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DECLARATION

I, Ilado Mary Goretty, declare that this report is my own and has never been presented to any institution, university for award of certificate, diploma, degree or masters.

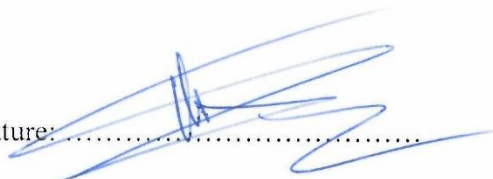
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ILADO MARY GORETTY

APPROVAL

I therefore certify that the report bearing the title teacher involvement in decision making in Soroti district is original and personal work of Ilado Mary Goretty who is a student of Uganda Christian University offering Masters in Educational Management and Planning.

Signature:



Date:



Dr. Mulyanyuma Ayeta Aaron

University Supervision

DEDICATION

I dearly dedicate this work to my beloved husband children and my head teacher for their endurance in my absence, may the Almighty God bless you all.

Not forgetting my dear friend Angwech Grace for her support she gave to me during the course

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My sincere thanks go to my supervisor Dr. Mulyanyuma Ayeta Aaron for their endurance and tireless efforts rendered to me during the study. Not forgetting the lectures of Uganda Christian University for their support. God bless you all.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BoG	Board of Governors
DEO	District Education Officer
DIS	District Inspector of Schools
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCES	National Centre for Education Statistics
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDM	Participatory Decision-Making
PLE	Primary Leaving Examinations
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SMC	School Management Committee
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TMIS	Teacher Management Information System
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics ‘
UCU	Uganda Christian University
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPE	Universal Primary Education

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between teachers' participation in decision-making and students' academic performance in primary schools in Soroti District, Uganda. Specifically, it assessed: (i) the extent to which teachers' participation in school administration influences students' academic performance; (ii) the effect of teachers' involvement in instructional decision-making on the classroom learning environment; and (iii) the role of professional empowerment in promoting students' academic performance. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, using quantitative data collected from teachers, complemented by key informant interviews for triangulation. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Findings revealed that teachers' participation in school administration was generally limited in crucial areas such as academic planning, policy formulation, budgeting, and committee work, with only 54.9% of teachers actively involved in decision-making at the school level. Regression results indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between teachers' involvement in governance and students' academic performance, suggesting that empowering teachers through participatory governance structures can enhance educational outcomes. Conversely, teachers' involvement in instructional decision-making was found to be constrained by poor communication, inadequate consultation, limited logistical and financial support, and perceived unfairness in transfer processes. Regression analysis showed that teacher participation in instructional decision-making had a small and statistically non-significant influence on the classroom learning environment, indicating the need for stronger motivational and structural supports. Regarding professional empowerment, the study found low levels of planning autonomy, minimal support for innovation, and limited involvement in curriculum implementation and accountability mechanisms, with an overall mean of 2.252, reflecting a low perception of empowerment. Regression analysis further revealed a weak and statistically non-significant relationship between professional empowerment and students' academic performance ($R^2 = 0.006$), implying that empowerment alone does not yield substantial improvement without a supportive institutional system. The study concludes that while teachers' participation in governance plays a critical role in improving learning outcomes, both instructional decision-making and professional empowerment require system-wide redesign to align with broader support mechanisms. The study recommends: (1) institutionalizing governance frameworks that actively involve teachers in decision-making; (2) investing in the training of teacher leaders; (3) improving communication and fairness in transfer policies; (4) developing teacher-friendly transfer and support systems; and (5) aligning teacher training with classroom realities while promoting autonomy, innovation, accountability, and recognition. Collectively, these measures aim to strengthen both teacher morale and student academic performance in Soroti District primary schools.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter will present the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose and objectives of the study, the research questions to be explored, the justification and significance of the study, the scope of the study, the conceptual framework, and an outline of the subsequent chapters.

1.1 Background to the Study

Globally, the quality of education and student learning outcomes has been consistently linked to the effectiveness and motivation of teachers, making human resource management practices in education a central concern in the twenty-first century. Teacher participation in decision-making—defined as the extent to which teachers are involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating school policies—has emerged as one of the most critical human resource management strategies for improving teacher morale, institutional performance, and student achievement. The argument that teacher involvement enhances school effectiveness is rooted in democratic and participatory educational philosophy, most notably advanced by John Dewey (1916), who emphasized that shared governance fosters ownership, creativity, and professional responsibility. Sergiovanni (1967) later reinforced this position through the concept of collegial leadership, positing that schools perform better when teachers are regarded not as subordinates but as partners in educational leadership.

Across the world, empirical evidence supports the link between participatory human resource management practices and academic performance. In the United States, Supovitz (2002) found that collective teacher efficacy and shared decision-making

accounted for significant variations in student outcomes, particularly in low-resource schools. Similarly, research synthesized by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019; 2020) in its Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) reports that schools characterized by teacher collaboration, shared governance, and instructional leadership exhibit higher student achievement and teacher satisfaction. In Asian and Middle Eastern contexts, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, Alwadi (2024) and Mohamed (2022) demonstrated that teachers' participation in curriculum design, professional planning, and school policy formulation was associated with improved classroom environments, learner engagement, and academic success. These findings align with broader human resource management theory, which argues that employee involvement in decision-making enhances motivation, accountability, and innovation (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Across Africa, the debate on teacher involvement in decision-making has gained renewed attention as education systems contend with persistent challenges of teacher shortages, low morale, and underperformance. UNESCO (2024) estimates that sub-Saharan Africa will require more than 15 million additional teachers by 2030 to meet universal education targets under Sustainable Development Goal 4. However, teacher attrition, limited professional autonomy, and weak participatory structures have undermined this ambition. Studies by Musengamana et al. (2023) in Rwanda revealed that while formal structures for teacher participation exist, teachers often have little real influence due to bureaucratic centralization and resource scarcity. Similarly, in Ethiopia, Tukura and Sapo (2023) found that teacher autonomy and professional development were strong predictors of improved student outcomes when schools actively involved teachers in governance. In Kenya,

Cherotich et al. (2024) demonstrated that professional empowerment—through participation in decision-making, planning, and evaluation—was positively correlated with secondary school academic performance. These continental studies reveal a growing consensus that participatory human resource management practices are not merely administrative conveniences but key determinants of both teacher performance and student achievement.

At the regional level, East African education systems reflect similar patterns of structural and institutional imbalance. Despite policy commitments to decentralization and teacher empowerment, implementation remains uneven. For instance, in Tanzania and Kenya, research has shown that head teachers often dominate decision-making processes, limiting opportunities for teacher input in curriculum, budgeting, and pedagogical planning (Mkumbo, 2012; Cherotich et al., 2024). This lack of inclusive governance has been associated with low teacher morale, job dissatisfaction, and poor classroom performance. The East African Community’s (EAC) Education Strategy (EAC, 2023) underscores the urgent need to enhance participatory leadership and professional autonomy among teachers to improve education quality across member states.

In Uganda, Human Resource Management challenges in the education sector remain profound and multifaceted. Nationally, the education system faces high teacher turnover, limited professional support, inadequate remuneration, and low motivation—factors that directly affect both teaching quality and student learning. The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB, 2020; 2024) reports consistent underperformance in Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE), with a growing number of pupils failing to attain Division One or Two grades. Studies by Lamaro and Lalam (2023) and Nanjala (2025) attribute these trends to weak teacher motivation, limited

involvement in school decision-making, and insufficient professional development opportunities. Moreover, human resource management practices in Ugandan schools remain predominantly top-down, with most strategic and instructional decisions made at the administrative level, leaving teachers as implementers rather than contributors. This hierarchical arrangement not only diminishes teachers' sense of ownership but also erodes their commitment to improving classroom outcomes.

Within Soroti District, these national challenges are even more pronounced. The district continues to record persistent low academic performance, teacher absenteeism, and limited engagement in participatory management structures. Reports from the Soroti District Education Office (2023) highlight that less than half of teachers are involved in school-level planning, budgeting, and policy deliberations. Teachers often experience limited autonomy in instructional decisions and inadequate professional empowerment, resulting in low morale and poor student outcomes. Despite government initiatives such as the Teacher Effectiveness and Learner Achievement program and continuous professional development frameworks, gaps remain in translating these policies into actual participatory governance at the school level. These local realities suggest that improving teacher participation in decision-making could serve as a pivotal human resource management strategy for enhancing both teacher performance and student learning outcomes.

The literature reviewed thus indicates that while teacher participation in decision-making has been globally and regionally acknowledged as a determinant of school effectiveness, its actual implementation and impact remain context-dependent. In Uganda—and particularly in Soroti District—teacher involvement is limited, professional empowerment is low, and communication channels are weak.

Consequently, the potential of participatory human resource management practices to improve academic performance has not been fully realized. This situation underscores the need for empirical inquiry into how teachers' participation in decision-making relates to students' academic performance within the specific contextual realities of Soroti District primary schools. Such understanding will inform evidence-based reforms aimed at strengthening participatory governance, enhancing teacher motivation, and ultimately improving educational outcomes.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite increased investment in Uganda's primary education, pupils in Soroti District continue to perform poorly in national assessments. In the 2024 Primary Leaving Examinations, only 0.87% of candidates attained Division One, while nearly a quarter failed outright (Nanjala, 2024). This crisis persists despite substantial resource inputs, such as the UGX 12 billion allocated in the 2022/2023 financial year for classrooms, teachers' housing, and furniture (Uganda Radio Network, 2022). The persistence of low performance despite these investments suggests that the challenge is not merely infrastructural but institutional—rooted in weak governance, inadequate teacher engagement, and limited professional empowerment.

Evidence increasingly shows that teacher participation in school-level decision-making enhances motivation, accountability, and innovation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; OECD, 2019). However, in Soroti District, teachers are largely excluded from critical decisions concerning planning, implementation, evaluation, and communication, which directly shape classroom processes and learning conditions. School plans are often imposed from above, instructional implementation remains rigid and compliance-driven, teacher input in assessments is minimal, and communication between staff and administration is predominantly

one-way. These governance weaknesses erode teachers' sense of ownership, reduce morale, and weaken the link between instruction and learner outcomes.

Consequently, student performance indicators—including Primary Leaving Examination results, progress exams, midterm tests, monthly, and daily assessments—remain low. The fundamental problem, therefore, is the limited participation of teachers in decision-making processes, which undermines their professional empowerment and constrains efforts to improve pupil academic performance. Addressing this governance gap is vital for transforming Soroti District's schools from resource-dependent systems into learning-centered institutions driven by empowered and accountable teachers.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To examine the relationship between teacher involvement in decision-making processes and pupils' academic performance in public primary schools within Soroti District, Uganda.

1.4 Specific Objectives

- i. To examine the extent to which teacher involvement in school governance influences pupils' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools.
- ii. To assess the impact of teacher participation in instructional decision making on the classroom learning environment in Soroti District primary schools.
- iii. To determine the role of professional empowerment in enhancing pupils' academic achievement in Soroti District primary schools.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. To what extent does teacher involvement in school governance influence pupils' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools?
- ii. What is the impact of teacher participation in instructional decision making on the classroom learning environment in Soroti District primary schools?
- iii. What role does professional empowerment play in enhancing pupils' academic achievement in Soroti District primary schools?

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Geographical Scope

This present research is on Soroti District in Eastern Uganda. Previously, it was part of the mother Teso district of Kumi, Katakwi, Kaberamaido, Amuria, Bukedea, Ngora, Serere and Soroti. The total area of the district is approximately 2,662.5 km² of which 2,256.5 km² land and 406 km² is water. From the 2024 National Population and Housing Census, Soroti District has an approximate population of 220,698 people. The district's education system includes 69 government-aided primary schools, five post-primary schools, and a training college. Despite these schools, the district is beset by inadequate infrastructure, huge pupils against minute teachers, and limited teaching materials. Focusing on Soroti District allows for in-depth

examination of how involving teachers in decision-making processes can affect student performance in a context of resource limitation and ongoing education reforms.

1.6.2 Time Scope

This Study covered four years from 2021 to 2024. This choice of period is similarly aligned with national and district-level education planning cycles. Therefore, by focusing on this time, the study will span a period of crucial educational reforms and investments hence providing a broad perspective on how the involvement of teachers in decision-making might have influenced academic performance in the aftermath of these developments.

1.6.3 Content Scope

This study focused on examining the relationship between teacher involvement in decision-making and pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Soroti District in Uganda. It will examine the extent to which teachers are involved in the management of schools, including curriculum development, allocation of resources, and policy formulation. It will also examine the impact of this involvement on the academic performance of the learners, using parameters such as pupil-to-teacher ratios, availability of teaching materials, and the condition of infrastructure.

1.7 Justification for the Study

The study is highly imperative as it tries to address a conspicuous void in Uganda's education research through the examination of the impact of teachers' involvement in decision-making on learning achievements in Soroti District—a scenario that has been empirically less-studied despite its persistently low learning scores. While cross-country research highlights that participative decision-making is likely to

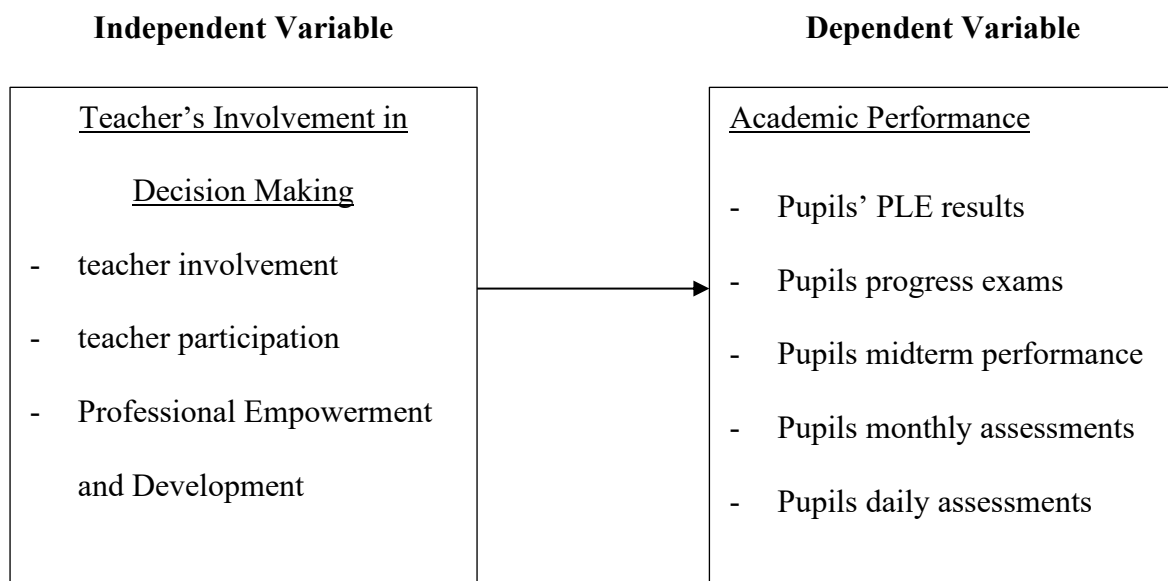
strengthen teacher commitment, professional competence, and ultimately student performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019), in poorly resourced and poorly infrastructure decentralized education systems like in Soroti, there is insufficient evidence on the manner in which these interactions take place. Critics such as Apple (2004) and Ball (2008) cautioned that global education reforms homogenize the assumption that participatory approaches are transformatory without considering local political economies and institutional cultures, which can limit genuine participation. In generating localized, context-specific knowledge of the effect of teacher voice on school-level learning outcomes, this research contributes to a desperately needed evidence base that will assist in informing more advanced education policy in Uganda and other low-income settings. The study would strategically relevant to Ministry of Education and Sports and district authorities in guiding policy reforms and resource allocation that are locally sensitive as opposed to mere duplication of universal national models. The study further enriches the academic literature on participatory governance in education by illustrating how global theory on teacher empowerment combines with teachers' everyday experience of working in resource-poor rural schools. In so doing, it not only adds to scholarly understanding but also offers tangible ways to improve learning equity and efficacy of brittle schooling systems.

1.8 Significance of the study

This study intends to contribute to the knowledge in educational management by means of the empirical confirmation of the influence of teacher participation in decision-making on the academic performance of Soroti District, Uganda. While literature has addressed some aspects of teacher motivation and school management, it is greatly lacking in its concentration on the area of teacher

participation in decision-making within the premise of public primary schools in Soroti. Through tackling this under-researched area, the study would offer an insight into the manner in which inclusive governance structures can influence education outcomes, thereby informing policy development and implementation efforts aimed at enhancing schools' performance. Furthermore, the research will result in the satisfaction of the requirement for the award of a Master's Degree in Educational Management and Planning at Uganda Christian University, which will provide the researcher with field exposure and experience related to the administration of education and policy analysis.

1.9 Conceptual Framework



Source: Adopted from: Sergiovanni (1967), Day, Sammons, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Hopkins, 2007, (Bush & Glover, 2014; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006)

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework (Modified by the Research)

The above figure shows that teachers' involvement in decision making is likely to directly enhance academic performance by offering an environment for collaboration to foster teaching and classroom management quality, hence contributing to better learning for students. When teachers become involved

directly in school management and curriculum planning, they gain a sense of ownership and mission that translates into more efficient instructional procedures (Bush & Glover, 2014; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). This involvement and additional professional growth can lead to better communication, innovative teaching methods, and eventually a more responsive learning environment, hence student achievement (Day, Sammons, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Hopkins, 2007).

Operational Definitions

Teacher participation refers to active and intentional engagement of teachers in decision-making, governance, and operational processes that shape school life and teaching practice. It includes participation by teachers in policy-making, curriculum construction, resource management, and planning at the school level, as well as their classroom work (Somech, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2020). Teacher participation is a measure of distributed leadership that includes shared responsibility and power between members of the school community for building collective efficacy and innovation, according to Harris (2014). Scholars like Bush and Glover (2016) contend that genuine participation goes beyond token representation by requiring teachers to exercise real influence and agency in decision making affecting their work and students' learning outcomes. Participation is therefore both a workplace right and an organizational necessity, which ensures that teacher reforms are guided by practitioners' expertise and that teachers are in charge of school targets and outcomes.

Teacher participation is the way through which teachers contribute ideas, offer opinions, and are involved in group decision-making in the structures of pedagogical management and school administration (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Garcia & Nguyen, 2019). While often synonymous with involvement, participation is concerned with the extent and type of teachers' participation in specific school processes such as curriculum committees, policy-making, school improvement planning, and instructional decision-making (Leithwood & Louis, 2012). Genuine participation, as Blasé and Kirby (2000) theorized, entails dialogic communication, shared problem-solving, and respect between administrators and teachers. Contemporary research positions teacher engagement in democratic professionalism contexts where

teachers are seen as co-constructors of policy and practice, rather than implementers (Evans, 2011; Frost, 2014). Engagement is mediated by school culture, leadership style, and policy context to some extent, which determines whether teachers' contribution is translated into empowerment or symbolic (Spillane, 2006). Professional empowerment and development are concurrent dimensions of teacher growth that foster autonomy, competence, and change capacity of teachers in their professional environments. Professional empowerment is defined as providing teachers with more power over instructional methods, curriculum planning, evaluation procedures, and school decision-making (Nguyen & Harris, 2018; Adams & Parker, 2022). It is indicative of teachers' ability to act with self-efficacy and confidence, as postulated in Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory in which self-efficacy belief is theorized to be a main performance determinant.

Professional development, on the other hand, entails official provision for continuous learning, including training, mentoring, reflective practice, and cooperation to build teachers' knowledge, skill, and instructional innovation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2019). When brought together, development and empowerment form the foundation of professional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), where teacher agency, collective capacity, and moral purpose blend to improve teaching quality and student results. In their own right, empowerment (Sahlberg, 2015) can result in stagnation, and development can impede impact; thus, successful education reform is dependent on their symbiotic dynamic within supportive institutional settings.

Pupil Academic Performance refers to the measurable indication of knowledge, skills, competencies, and attitudes a student demonstrates as a product of formal learning and classroom instruction. It embodies the extent to which students reach

curriculum learning outcomes, achieve learning expectations, and demonstrate mastery of subject matter through tests, examinations, continuous assessment, and teacher observation (OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2020). For Nyagosia (2011), academic success is quantitative and qualitative expression of mental development of a student, encompassing not only test results but also critical thinking, problem solving, and application of knowledge to real-life situations.

Hanushek and Woessmann (2012) contend that academic performance of students relies on various determinants that interact with each other, e.g., the quality of teachers, school environment, teaching facilities, socio-economic status, parents' involvement, and students' motivation. Here, performance is not necessarily the result of effort or intelligence but a systemic outcome of the learning context. Similarly, Eze (2015) conceptualizes pupil performance as the outward manifestation of scholarly capability that radiates from effective teaching-learning activities, relevance of the curriculum, and facilitatory educational leadership.

At the primary level, particularly in developing countries such as Uganda, academic achievement of students is a significant indicator of the quality of education and a predictor of future socio-economic and educational prospects (MoES, 2023). Not only does it symbolize personal success but also the performance of the school system and determines national goals of human capital development and educational equality.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature that informs the study, focusing on both theoretical and empirical perspectives. It examined key concepts including teacher involvement in school governance, teacher participation in decision-making, and professional empowerment, all in relation to student academic performance and the classroom learning environment. Then it highlights the gaps in the literature that justify the need for this study.

2.1 Theoretical Review

Traditional theory has kept teacher involvement in decision-making and student achievement in place through theory on Participatory Decision-Making theory, which asserts that joint governance induces ownership, accountability, and professional agency among teachers (Somech, 2010). Participatory Decision-Making's underlying philosophy is that when teachers are given the authority to shape policies and operational choices—from curriculum development to budget allocation—they are more likely to feel invested in institutionally-focused goals and committed to enhancing student achievement. This theoretical framework has been supported by Wadesango (2012), who demonstrated that strategic teacher participation in Zimbabwean schools was linked with improved student performance, and Bush and Glover (2014), who claim that participatory frameworks make schools more effective. Participatory Decision-Making is, however, not without its critics. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) caution that over-decentralization can lead to decision-making bottlenecks and confusion regarding accountability, and can water down the priority of instructional improvement. This equilibrium between empowerment and

sophistication in governance is a core concern of current debates, highlighting the need for institution-specific and context-sensitive implementation models.

Complementing Participatory Decision-Making, Stakeholder Theory is another theoretical framework through which to interpret teacher participation in educational governance. Freeman (1984) developed this position through argument that organizations operate optimally when they cater to the interests and demands of all stakeholders—employees, communities, and customers—over the interests of some privileged managerial elite. Applied to education, this would imply that teachers, being core stakeholders, should be positioned to provide considerable input on decisions affecting pedagogical practice and learning spaces for students. Empirical evidence upholds this doctrine: for instance, Mokoena (2012) found in South Africa that participatory administration bolstered teacher morale and institutional confidence. Yet inclusivity practice is problematic. Researchers such as Louis et al. (2010) note that symbolic inclusion—where teachers are invited to offer input in formal mechanisms but lack any real influence—can engender cynicism and disengagement, something testified to in Rwanda by Asia Social Issues (2024). These critiques emphasize the necessity to move beyond procedural participation to genuinely deliberative and meaningful engagement mechanisms.

While these theoretical frames have enriched understanding regarding teacher participation, significant gaps persist in contextual and local research. Considerable literature has been focused on Anglophone and Francophone Africa (Bush & Glover, 2016; Wadesango, 2012), while relatively fewer studies have explored the participatory governance dynamics of Uganda's decentralized education system. As an example, studies in Tororo District have brought out the motivational power of extrinsic rewards (Kampala International University, 2018), while those in Apac and

Mbarara districts have illuminated the governance ability and monitoring (Metropolitan Journal of Social and Educational Research, 2024). Nevertheless, few have particularly addressed how teacher decision-making participation affects learning results in Soroti District. The study adds to the body of knowledge on decolonising educational leadership (Sayed & Kanjee, 2013) and developing contextually relevant models of participatory governance by filling this empirical vacuum. In the end, this kind of study shapes Ugandan policy and practice while also adding to the body of knowledge about inclusive governance as a catalyst for better educational outcomes worldwide.

2.2 To examine the extent to which teacher involvement in school governance influences student academic performance

Teacher involvement in school leadership refers to the extent to which teachers engage in deciding on curriculum, teaching practices, resource allocation, and general school management. The practice is guided by Distributed Leadership Theory, which conceptualizes leadership as a shared and relational process rather than an individual characteristic or hierarchical event (Spillane, 2006; Harris, 2014). Schools that distribute leadership to teachers are more apt, Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020) argue, to have professional communities that are stronger, with greater levels of motivation and learning results. Similarly, the OECD (2019) notes that systems that engage teachers as coparticipants in governance—Finland and Singapore are the examples provided—achieve higher levels of learner performance, teacher satisfaction, and institutional coherence.

However, this participatory paradigm is not devoid of its challenge. Hallinger and Walker (2017) observe that teacher participation must operate within firmly entrenched accountability mechanisms to prevent inconsistency and decision

paralysis. Ingersoll (2017) also explains that while autonomy enhances professional effectiveness, decentralization without coordination will compromise institutional accountability and organizational coherence. This underscores the imperative of combining participation with strong leadership and formal coordination mechanisms. Participatory governance has been associated worldwide with improved academic achievement of students because of enhanced agency, dedication, and creativity of teachers. Studies in Europe, North America, and East Asia indicate that when teachers participate meaningfully in school governance, the quality of instruction is better and schools experience more favorable learning outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2020; Lee & Kim, 2021). In the case of South Korea and Japan, teacher involvement extends from consultation to curriculum change and peer-led professional development and leads to long-term gains in student learning (Lee & Kim, 2021). The literature, nevertheless, cautions against naive or over-optimistic borrowing of models of participatory governance. Ball (2012) and Mulford (2003) alert that unabated decentralization in the face of weak institutional support can lead to fragmentation, role confusion, and inefficiency. Harris (2014) thus advocates for an equal model of distributed leadership that mediates autonomy with accountability in a way that teacher involvement makes a significant contribution to student learning.

Across sub-Saharan Africa, teacher involvement in management has been a key component of decentralization and school-based management reforms aimed at promoting responsiveness to local education demands and accountability. These reforms, as documented by Bush and Glover (2016) and Akyeampong et al. (2013), seek to decentralize decision-making authorities to schools and communities and enable teachers and communities to address long-standing issues such as shortages

of resources and curriculum relevance. Empirical evidence from Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania illustrates that where teachers participate fully in management committees, school planning, and decision-making, there is improved attendance, motivation, and learning achievements of students (Ndayambaje & Rutayisire, 2019).

The African literature also refers to persisting tensions between policy rhetoric and practice. Teacher participation is also shallow or symbolic due to entrenched bureaucratic hierarchies, cultural attitudes to authority, and poor governance capacity (Tikly & Barrett, 2013; Kinyanjui, 2016). Bush and Glover (2016) also note that in the majority of African schools, leadership remains principal-centered, which restricts teachers' space to innovate. Similarly, Chisholm (2009) and Akyeampong et al. (2013) note that systemic weaknesses—like weak institutional monitoring, weak training, and weak motivation—compromise the efficacy of participatory governance. Such findings suggest that participatory models must be contextually adapted to local sociocultural realities rather than being borrowed wholesale from foreign education systems (Tikly & Barrett, 2013).

Teacher participation in governance in East Africa is inextricably linked with broader decentralization and community involvement policies. Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania all have systems requiring teachers to collaborate with school management committees and local leaders in planning and accountability (World Bank, 2018). In Kenya, Wanzare (2002) confirmed that teacher participation in the implementation of Free Primary Education enhanced curriculum innovation and resource distribution and thereby student performance. Nevertheless, long-standing difficulties remain. Kinyanjui (2016) further states that role confusion, political interference, and inadequate leadership capacity tend to render teacher participation ineffective.

Ndayambaje and Rutayisire (2019) therefore stress the development of governance competencies among the teachers so that decentralization can lead to actual empowerment.

The Education Act (2008) of Uganda formalizes teacher participation through Boards of Governors and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). But the degree to which these structures function well varies widely among schools and districts. Experience in the Apac, Mbarara, and Soroti districts indicates that schools with vibrant teacher involvement in decision-making—especially in budgeting, discipline management, and curriculum modification—also exhibit better student retention and academic performance (Kampala International University, 2023; Metropolitan Journal of Social and Educational Research, 2024). Notwithstanding this, challenges still exist, including role boundary ambiguities, lack of supervision, political interference, and weak administrative capacity (Businge, 2020; Kyeyune, 2019). The literature further shows that expanded governance roles can increase the workload of teachers, leading to fatigue and diminished classroom performance (Lee & Kim, 2021).

Besides administrative concerns, Ugandan scholars such as Ssali (2018) and Akumu (2020) highlight that teacher engagement in governance is also part of the broader agenda of decolonizing educational leadership. They argue that participatory leadership not only enhances instructional quality but also democratizes school leadership, empowering teachers from marginalized communities and enabling culturally responsive teaching. Teacher participation, in this perspective, is both a pedagogical reform and a social justice imperative to break hierarchical colonial legacies in education administration.

Cumulatively, literature reviewed demonstrates that there is a sound theoretical and empirical basis for linking teacher participation in school governance with

improved academic performance of students. Literature also brings out the fact that such participation must be supported by facilitative administrative structures, continuous professional development, and context-sensitive leadership arrangements. In Uganda, although there are clear policy intentions, evidence remains fragmented on the specific mechanisms through which teacher participation in school governance leads to improved learning outcomes. Most of the existing studies are dealing with inputs such as infrastructure, funding, or teacher supply rather than school governance processes. Furthermore, empirical examination of precisely how teachers' involvement in decision-making, planning, and evaluation impacts the academic achievement of students at the primary school level is scant. These gaps vindicate the present study's focus on examining the extent to which the involvement of teachers in school governance influences the academic performance of students in Soroti District, and in the process, contributing to a wider knowledge of participatory education governance in Uganda's decentralized system.

2.3 Impact of teacher participation in decision making on the classroom learning environment.

Teacher participation in decision-making has come to dominate classroom learning environments more and more, tracing back to mounting recognition that teacher agency is important to instructional quality and student engagement. Participation is commonly defined as teachers' connection with governance structures that shape curriculum planning, pedagogical practices, classroom order policy, and overall school operational decisions (Somech, 2010; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Researchers are convinced that genuine participation creates a sense of professional ownership, internal motivation, and accountability among teachers that ultimately lead to a better and more efficient learning environment for the learners (Miller & Stevens, 2020). Distributed leadership theory provides a robust theoretical foundation to this phenomenon, the notion that leadership may not be limited to hierarchical roles but shared among the actors of the education system to drive collective problem-solving and joint accountability (Spillane, 2006; Harris, 2014). Empirical research identifies the revolutionary shift in the classroom dynamics through teacher engagement. Miller and Stevens (2020) demonstrated, in a cross-sectional survey of over 300 primary school teachers, that higher levels of decision-making participation were associated with improved classroom management, pupil engagement, and the development of supportive learning contexts. This evidence is supported by educational leadership models emphasizing participatory and distributed leadership as means of enhancing teacher efficacy, professional collaboration, and pupil-centered pedagogy (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). However, Miller and Stevens caution that cross-sectional designs limit inferences about

causality, emphasizing the need for longitudinal approaches to reveal the temporal dynamics of participatory governance and classroom outcomes.

Mixed-method studies reinforce the mechanisms through which teacher engagement shapes classroom climates. Garcia and Nguyen (2019) employed both surveys and qualitative interviews to reveal that participatory governance enhances peer cooperation, teacher morale, and instructional practices responding to the diverse needs of students. These results are consistent with Bandura's social cognitive theory positioning teacher self-efficacy at the heart of classroom management effectiveness and instructional innovation (Bandura, 1997). Garcia and Nguyen also argue that facilitative leadership architectures are necessary; without facilitative leadership, benefits of teacher involvement have the potential to be surface-level, revisiting Spillane's (2006) and poststructuralist analyses of power disparities in school decision-making.

Longitudinal tests also help to illuminate the conditions under which teacher involvement influences classroom climates on a long-term basis. O'Connor and Patel (2018) tracked measures of class climate, student engagement, and quality of teacher-student relationship over two years following the initiation of participatory governance policies. Their findings affirm that sustained improvement of classroom dynamics is contingent upon systems of integrated support like professional development, resource provisioning, and regular administrative practice. This underlines Fullan's (2007) contention that pedagogical reform is an emergent attribute of long-term capacity building but not a series of discrete interventions. Authors also acknowledge contextual mediators, such as socio-economic disparities and levels of administrative support, which have the potential to enhance or lose the impacts of teacher engagement on classroom climates.

Experimental and quasi-experimental evidence underpin these arguments. Rodriguez and Lee (2021) contrasted schools with participatory governance systems to those with traditional hierarchical structures and concluded that teacher engagement is related to more engaged students, improved instruction quality, and improved teacher job satisfaction. Their findings align with self-determination theory, which validates that autonomy and agency enhance intrinsic motivation and professional commitment (Deci & Ryan, 2000). But Rodriguez and Lee caution that additional tasks of governance contribute to teacher workload, stress, and burnout, and hence require sustainable mechanisms that balance empowerment with well-being (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

The literature further identifies substantial structural and socio-political constraints that may limit the efficacy of participatory governance. Scholars like Ball (2012) and Apple (2013) argue that entrenched power structures, institutional reluctance, and tokenistic participation are able to suffocate genuine teacher agency, particularly within tight-fisted or politically charged environments. Tikly and Barrett (2013) observe that tokenism can serve the effect of de-motivating teachers, developing disengagement, and perpetuating inequalities in classroom life. These critiques require intersectional and context-specific methods that incorporate gender, socio-economic position, and cultural norms in determining the opportunities and limitations of teacher engagement.

There is also new scholarship that explores the potential of online platforms as sources of innovative solutions to achieve participatory governance and enhanced classroom climates. Trust and Whalen (2020) demonstrate that cooperative digital tools have the potential to reduce barriers of hierarchy, enhance access to decision-making, and heighten teacher voice, leading to more inclusive, adaptive, and

responsive classroom climate. This reflects a broader global trend wherein integration with technology offers new channels for teacher empowerment, inducing collaborative pedagogical practices even in the context of restricted-resource conditions.

Synthesizing current research leads to the conclusion that teacher participation in school decision-making influences classroom learning environments significantly and in several ways. It is mediated by morale, peer collaboration, curriculum reform, and the creation of supportive pedagogical environments. However, its translation into improved classroom outcomes hinges on mindful policy design, continuous professional development, facilitative leadership, balanced resource allocations, and responsiveness to system inequities. The results suggest that participatory governance is not just a management tool but also a transformative vehicle for the construction of inclusive, efficient, and robust learning environments, with world-wide implications for educational reforms, particularly within decentralized and resource-scarce systems.

2.4 The role of professional empowerment in enhancing student academic achievement.

Professional empowerment has increasingly been recognized as an important force behind student academic achievement, encapsulating teacher autonomy, access to continuous professional education, and actual involvement in school-level decision-making. Empowerment, in this case, refers to the granting of formal as well as informal control, resources, and support that allow teachers to make professional judgments, pedagogically innovate, and shape institutional governance so that it accelerates student learning (Nguyen & Harris, 2018; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Researchers argue that this empowerment encourages intrinsic motivation,

professional ownership, and sustained commitment to instructional excellence, building the conditions under which improved academic outcomes are produced (Bandura, 1997; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Empirical evidence supports this connection: Nguyen and Harris (2018) report a strong positive correlation between teacher empowerment and student performance, illustrating synergies among professional agency and learning outcomes. However, since they employed a cross-sectional design, causal inference is limited, emphasizing the need for longitudinal, context-dependent research to examine persistence and dynamics of effects of empowerment (Fullan, 2007).

More research provides insight into how empowerment at the professional level translates to enhanced academic performance. Martinez, Li, and Chen (2019) apply a mixed-methods approach to establish that teachers who have greater autonomy and voice in pedagogy and governance issues have greater instructional innovation and responsiveness to student needs. The findings agree with teacher leadership and professional learning community frameworks, which assert that reform initiated by teachers in collaboration produces adaptive, high-achieving classrooms (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). However, Martinez et al. contend that empowerment is dependent on systemic congruity, with the following observation that insufficient administrative support or resource constraints might limit the beneficial effects of empowerment programs (Leithwood et al., 2020).

Strong causal evidence comes from quasi-experimental research, e.g., Clarkson, Moore, and Santos (2020), which contrasts student outcomes in schools with empowerment-focused professional development and schools with standard professional development approaches. These results indicate statistically significant improvements in student achievement in the empowered group, validating the

central role of professional agency in teaching effectiveness. This aligns with international policy recommendations for teacher autonomy and context-specific professional development to improve instructional quality (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019). Yet, Clarkson et al. issue a caution against overgeneralization due to selection bias and contextual difference and therefore emphasize the need for replication across different educational contexts. Longitudinal findings help also explain the cumulative impact of professional empowerment. Adams and Parker (2022) track cohorts of students and teachers over three years with incremental and persistent gains in student attainment linked with continued teacher autonomy and targeted professional development. Their research is a model of Fullan's (2007) argument that educational transformation is the result of long-term capacity-building, rather than interventions occurring in an isolated context. Adams and Parker do point out the regional basis of their sample, which indicates a need for policies and programs based on locally situated contexts and culturally situated realities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

While the literature widely testifies to the beneficial influence of professional empowerment on student learning, there are limitations and risks that criticism raises. Scholars argue that empowerment in the absence of equitable access to resources, development opportunities, and supportive leadership frameworks can, in return, deepen inequities in student achievement (Sahlberg, 2015; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019). Unaccountable teacher freedom within under-resourced or unobserved environments has the potential to increase professional stress and burnout, lowering teaching quality and student performance (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). These results necessitate a critical

understanding of empowerment as an interspersed process across nested systems rather than a distinct intervention (Leithwood et al., 2020).

There is also a growing literature that emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive and intersectional professional empowerment strategies. Scholars such as Mansfield et al. (2018) and Villegas and Lucas (2007) argue that empowering teachers of marginalized groups is a means of addressing structural injustice, pedagogic diversification, and education justice. Such arguments extend empowerment from professional improvement to a social and ethical agenda, situating teacher agency as a vector of inclusive and equitable educational change. In addition, digital technologies are increasingly used to enhance professional empowerment by virtual collaboration, peer mentoring, and participatory decision-making, overcoming geographical and resource limitations as it provides greater access to opportunities for innovation (Trust & Whalen, 2020).

Despite large-scale international evidence, there is a critical gap in knowledge about how professional empowerment operates in under-resourced and decentralized contexts, such as Soroti District, Uganda. Previous research widely handles national or urbanized education systems with hardly any exploration of local socio-cultural, economic, and institutional processes (Bush & Glover, 2016; Leithwood & Louis, 2012). While teacher participation in governance systems like Boards of Governors and School Management Committees has been linked with more effective resource management and student achievement in Uganda (Wanzare, 2002; Metropolitan Journal of Social and Educational Research, 2024), the existing research does not much break down information to indicate how these structures function in rural areas where resource scarcity, cultural context, and bureaucratic red tape set the

stage for empowerment. The gap limits understanding of teacher agency at the local level and its concrete effects on learning outcomes in decentralized systems.

It is important to fill this gap to develop more knowledge on participatory educational governance and professional empowerment. Empirical studies in case settings such as Soroti District can illuminate how teachers negotiate institutional boundaries, exercise agency, and put into practice pedagogical innovations under local socio-political and economic conditions (Akyeampong et al., 2013; Ssali, 2018). These studies enrich global scholarship by offering contextualized knowledge on how empowerment functions in decentralized and poor-resource settings, offering lessons for other settings around the world. Research in Soroti can inform evidence-based policy interventions that improve teacher motivation, instructional quality, and ultimately student academic performance by placing teacher empowerment within local governance, resource allocation, and professional development trajectories. This helps close the gap between theoretical discourse and real-world educational change (Kirk & Winthrop, 2013).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This study explored the influence of teachers' involvement in decision-making on pupil performance in Soroti District, Uganda. A descriptive cross-sectional study design was employed to gather qualitative and quantitative data from a representative sample of different stakeholders, including headteachers, teachers, and members of school management committees in sampled public primary schools. Through the application of stratified random and purposive sampling techniques, a representative sample of 142 participants was sampled. Data were collected through guided questionnaires and interviews and analysed quantitatively through SPSS for statistical trends and qualitatively through thematic analysis for qualitative insight. Ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality were strictly adhered to. Despite limited restrictions such as time constraints and access difficulties in remote areas, the methodology provided a comprehensive and reliable foundation for exploring how teacher participation in school decision-making influences the educational performance of students.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a correlational research design in examining the relationship between teacher involvement in decision-making and academic performance in public primary schools in Soroti District. The design was suitable for the collection of data at a specific moment, thereby enabling the assessment of prevailing practices, attitudes, and results without any disturbance of the study environment. According to Amanywa et al. (2017), the strategy enabled in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data

gathering techniques. This allowed for the identification of patterns and correlations between variables. The correlational research design allowed for the gathering of information from a representative sample, providing a snapshot of prevailing conditions and relationships related to teacher engagement and students' performance. This methodological choice was consistent with prevailing research that has used cross-sectional designs to successfully examine similar educational phenomena, thereby underpinning the validity and reliability of the study's findings (Mukirania et al., 2021).

3.2 Study Area

This research was undertaken in Soroti District within Uganda's Eastern Region, which offers urban and rural environments as well as a relatively varied socio-economic environment. The district's primary economic activity is subsistence agriculture, with its people mainly cultivating crops such as millet, cassava, beans, and simsim (Kelly, 2019). Administratively, Soroti District is divided into one municipality and one county, comprising ten sub-counties, three of which are municipal divisions (Soroti District Local Government, 2021). According to the 2014 Uganda Bureau of Statistics census, the district was populated by 297,160 people, of which 144,499 were males and 152,661 females (UBOS, 2014). In the educational sector, Soroti District had a total of 69 government-assisted primary schools that were the focus of this study (Soroti District Local Government, 2021). With the presence of the schools, the district was a suitable region where teachers' participation in school decision-making and academic achievement could be examined.

3.3 Study Population

Soroti district has 69 government aided primary schools. The study focused on four (4) government aided primary schools and in Ocokican Sub-County. The study target population comprises 224 respondents drawn from four governments-aided primary schools and three private primary schools for comparison purposes in Soroti District, namely seven Head teachers, Teachers, Parents, School Management Committee Members, one District Education Officer, and one District Inspector of Schools (Soroti District Local Government, 2021). These individuals are directly involved in the governance and instructional processes of four government-aided primary schools and private primary schools in the district, and their perspectives will be critical for understanding how teacher participation in decision-making influences academic performance (Soroti District Local Government, 2021).

3.4 Sample Size Determination

To determine an appropriate sample size for the study the researcher used Krejucie and Morgan table 1970, where study population $N=224$ and sample size $s =142$. Therefore, the sample size was 142 respondents

Table 3.1: Population and Sample Size Distribution

Category	Population	Sample Size
Headteachers	07	07
Teachers	115	72
Parents	30	19
School Management Committee (SMC) Members	70	44
District Education Officer (DEO)	01	01
District Inspector of Schools (DIS)	01	01

Total	224	142
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Primary Data: 2025

3.5 Sampling Techniques

A combination of probability and non-probability sampling techniques will be utilized to ensure representativeness and depth of information:

3.5.1 Stratified Random Sampling

Stratified random sampling was employed by first stratifying the population into clearly defined, homogeneous subgroups based on relevant characteristics such as role (e.g., headteacher, teacher, parent, School Management Committee member) and school. Participants were then sampled from each stratum employing simple random sampling such that each of them in the subgroup had an equal chance of being selected (Creswell, 2014; Kothari, 2004). This two-step procedure effectively reduced sampling error by controlling between-groups variability while retaining the benefits of random selection in strata (Teddlie & Yu, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

3.5.2 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling or also referred to as judgmental or criterion-based sampling, will be applied for choosing key informants with expert knowledge significant to the study (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Palinkas et al., 2011). For this research, the District Inspector of Schools and District Education Officer will be chosen particularly because of their roles in teacher-level policy implementation and governance supervision (Creswell, 2014; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The design will seek to have information rich cases as a priority to enable intensive scrutiny of the influence of decision making structures on scholarship performance (Etikan et al., 2016; Memon & Wilkins, 2024).

3.6 Data Collection Methods

3.6.1 Questionnaires

The study made use of structured questionnaires completed by all the sampled headteachers and teachers. The instruments contained closed-ended questions measured on a five-point Likert scale to assess levels of involvement in decision-making and perceptions regarding student academic performance (Kothari & Garg, 2014). Open-ended questions were also used to allow the respondents to offer explanations of specific challenges and suggest measures to enhance participatory governance. Questionnaires were personally distributed in all schools and collected after three days to allow for the highest response rates (Creswell, 2014).

3.6.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the District Education Officer and the District Inspector of Schools, whose perceptions at policy level were important in collecting information on issues of implementation and contextual variables (Kothari & Garg, 2014). An interview guide with key themes was used to inform the interviews while allowing space for venturing into emerging concerns as they arose (Creswell, 2014). The interviews, with participants' consent, were recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis.

3.7 Research Instruments

3.7.1 Questionnaires

Structured questionnaires were developed in three phases—item construction, scale development, and verification—following the plan of Boateng et al. (2018). Then, significant areas such as teacher involvement, factors of participation, and perceived effect on academic achievement were recognized and operationalized into concrete, clear items (Boateng, Musa, & Alkassim, 2018). Second, the questions were framed as single-concept statements and placed in a structure so that the most critical questions appeared early in the survey to avoid respondent fatigue (Gehlbach & Artino, 2018). Five-point Likert scales (e.g., "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree") were used in order to assess the intensity of attitudes and perceptions (Imperial College London, 2024). Finally, a pilot test was conducted among 15 headteachers and teachers to assess item clarity and internal consistency, having noted a Cronbach's alpha value of not less than 0.70 before large-scale roll-out (Boateng et al., 2018).

3.7.2 Interview Guides

Semi-structured interview schedules were developed using a five-step process: (1) review of the literature on participatory governance; (2) crafting open-ended questions; (3) expert review validation of content; (4) pilot interviewing; and (5) finalization, as suggested by Pitcho-Prelorentzos, Leshem, and Mahat-Shamir (2022). The key concerns explored participants' experience of decision-making structures, resource constraints, and perceived effects on outcomes for pupils. Follow-up questions were used to pursue emergent themes, allowing depth and adaptability of the interviews (Ruslin, Mashuri, Sarib, & Alhabsyi, 2022). Pilots were carried out on two district officials for questioning wording and sequencing adjustment, enhancing conversational flow, and ensuring adequate coverage of the study objectives (Pitcho-Prelorentzos et al., 2022).

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Prior to the start of fieldwork, the researcher secured district-level permission from the Soroti District Local Government's Education Department. Having secured all permits, the researcher made arrangements with administrators of seven government-aided primary schools to visit them in a manner that created minimum disruption to learning and teaching (MaintainS, 2020; Research Consult Uganda, 2024). The 28 teachers and 7 headteachers sampled were then personally administered structured questionnaires with clear verbal explanations and demonstrations on how to complete them. The questionnaires were collected three days later to guarantee maximum response rates (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Boateng et al., 2018). Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews with the District Education Officer and District Inspector of Schools were conducted at times convenient to each informant, using pre-tested interview guides and audio recording (with permission) to capture in-depth qualitative data (Pitcho-Prelorentzos et al., 2022). All

participants were provided with information sheets and signed informed consent forms. To ensure data quality, the researcher conducted periodic spot checks and debriefing sessions with research assistants while collecting the data (Stover et al., 2018).

3.9 Data Quality Control

3.9.1 Validity

Content validity of the questionnaire was obtained through a formal reviewing process with educational research experts, who had reviewed each question in terms of the study objectives and whether the question was pertinent to what it was assessing. This expert reviewing guaranteed that the instrument effectively covered the described content domains and was conceptually sound (Assess.com, 2023). Following the expert screening, pilot testing was conducted on a group of respondents from the target population to test and refine the items in the questionnaire for clarity and suitability. Pilot testing helped ensure that the questions were read as planned and correctly collected the targeted information, therefore enhancing the overall reliability and validity of the instrument (Chhetri & Khanal, 2024).

Table 3.2: Content Validity Index (CVI) Results

Construct	Number of Items	Expert Rating (Mean)	CVI Value
Teacher Participation in School Management	10	3.56	0.89
Teacher Participation in Instructional Decision-Making	8	3.44	0.86

Professional Empowerment	9	3.64	0.91
Pupil Academic Performance	7	3.52	0.88

The validity and reliability analysis of the research instruments confirmed that the measures used in the current study were methodologically and statistically valid. The Content Validity Index (CVI) results, derived from expert ratings of item representativeness, clarity, and relevance, indicated high content adequacy for all constructs. As Table 3.2 results reflect, all CVI figures for the primary constructs—Teacher Involvement in School Governance (Teacher Involvement in School Governance = 0.89), Teacher Participation in Instructional Decision-Making (Teacher Involvement in Instructional Decision-Making = 0.86), Professional Empowerment (Professional Empowerment = 0.91), and Pupil Academic Performance (Pupil Academic Performance = 0.88)—passed the proposed cut-off value of 0.70 by Polit and Beck (2012), thus confirming the high content validity of the instrument. In order to investigate internal consistency again, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for all measures were computed, and as can be seen in Table 2, all of the scales demonstrated sufficient reliability levels as Teacher Involvement in School Governance ($\alpha = 0.83$), Teacher Involvement in Instructional Decision-Making ($\alpha = 0.79$), Professional Empowerment ($\alpha = 0.85$), and Pupil Academic Performance ($\alpha = 0.81$) all surpassed the lowest satisfactory level of 0.70 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). These results affirm that the questionnaire items consistently and reliably measured their intended constructs, thereby making the data obtained reliable. The high reliability and validity scores supported by methodological triangulation of

qualitative interview findings from headteachers, teachers, and district education officials enhanced the internal validity and credibility of the study, thereby providing a strong foundation upon which further data analysis and interpretation could be conducted.

3.9.2 Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire internally was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with a coefficient of 0.7 and greater being considered acceptable, indicating an acceptable reliability level between items on the scale (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Internal statistical testing ensured that the questionnaire items were measuring the same construct consistently. To augment the validity of qualitative interview data, triangulation was employed by comparing and cross-checking data from different sources like teachers, headteachers, and district education officials, thereby augmenting the internal validity of the research findings (Bhandari, 2022).

Table 3.3: Reliability Test Results (Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients)

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Reliability Level
Teacher Involvement in School Governance	10	0.83	Acceptable
Teacher Involvement in Instructional Decision-Making	8	0.79	Acceptable
Professional Empowerment	9	0.85	High

Pupil Performance	Academic	7	0.81	Acceptable
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3.10 Data Analysis and Presentation

3.10.1 Quantitative data analysis:

Quantitative information collected using questionnaires with codes were coded numerically and entered into SPSS for analysis (Kent State LibGuides, 2024). Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were determined in order to provide the summary of the distribution of the key variables in terms of teacher involvement in decision-making and student performance (Taagepera & Russell, 2018). Frequency tables were used to present categorical distributions and demographic profiles (Kent State LibGuides, 2024). Inferential analysis, including Pearson's correlation and multiple regression, was employed to examine the direction, magnitude, and prediction relationship between teacher decision-making participation and student academic performance, in which tests of significance were interpreted at the 95% confidence level as dictated by SPSS procedural guidelines (Laerd Statistics, 2023).

3.10.2 Qualitative data analysis:

Qualitative interviews were transcribed word-for-word to convey the precision and depth of participant answers (Lumivero, 2022). Reflexive thematic analysis was conducted following Braun and Clarke's six-stage model, where data familiarization, preliminary coding, theme identification, review of themes, theme definition, and final write-up were conducted to identify emergent patterns regarding teacher governance experiences and perceived impact on student learning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). NVivo software was employed to enable organization and analysis of large

text segments with the aid of features such as autocoding and coding stripes, and detailed memos were maintained to note analytic decisions, reflexive notes, and developing interpretations throughout the process of analysis (Delve, 2023).

3.11 Ethical Considerations

This study upheld the basic ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, integrity, and beneficence throughout all stages of the research process. Ethical approval was requested from the Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee prior to data collection. All subjects were given an information sheet outlining the aim of the study, the procedures that would be followed, potential risks and benefits, and a request to sign a written informed consent; in the case of individuals under 18 years, assent was obtained in addition to parental consent (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed by assigning each respondent a unique code, and no personal detail was included in the research reports; electronic data were stored on password-protected drives. The principle of integrity was observed through faithful recording of responses, not making up or selectively presenting data, and use of peer-debriefing in data analysis to minimize researcher bias (Patton, 2015). Beneficence was also observed through provision of minimal risk to participants and arrangements for the dissemination of results to educational stakeholders in Soroti District to inform improvement initiatives (Resnik, 2018). Anticipated ethical concerns, such as participants' refusal to discuss school management freely due to relations of power, were addressed by conducting interviews in private places and highlighting the voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw at any time without penalty (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.12 Limitations of the Study

This study acknowledged with care a series of procedural and methodological limitations that would otherwise have impacted its interpretation as well as generalizability of findings. One of such was the collection of self-reported information from questionnaires and interviews, which poses a risk of generating social desirability bias, given that some of the participants might have given positive feedback or presented themselves or their institutions in a more positive light, affecting validity of the information (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Use of a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, while suitable for investigating associations, limited the causality inferences regarding student academic performance and teachers' involvement in decision-making, reducing findings to observed associations rather than cause-and-effect inferences (Kothari & Garg, 2014). Geographical limitations to public primary schools in Soroti District also restricted the external validity of the study because school practices in Soroti may not apply elsewhere across other districts and urban areas (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Besides, although the structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews assisted in the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, the richness of the data could have been tainted by interviewer bias and the issues related to closed-ended questions, as well as the subtleties of participants' experiences may not have been captured well (Patton, 2015). To mitigate these constraints, the study employed data triangulation through the participation of a diverse number of stakeholders—teachers, headteachers, parents, School Management Committee members, and district officials—and the integration of qualitative results to inform and support the quantitative data. Still, these acknowledged constraints may have still affected the depth, validity, and generalizability of the findings, and were clearly disclosed in the final study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents rate of return, demographic characteristic of respondents and the statistical analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in accordance with research objectives as sub-themes.

4.1 Rate of Return

Total of (147) questionnaires were issued and 142 (96.5%) were collected to the researcher. The researcher was able to follow up the questionnaire from the respondents. This was done through persistent check-up and enduring moment that has made it possible. The researcher also envisaged to carry out 8 interview sessions and they were all carried out representing 100%. The presentation was organized around the demographic characteristics and the research questions which guided the study and the result is presented below.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic data of respondents involved establishing the gender and age of respondents as are detailed below:

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

Table 4.1: Gender of Respondents

Gender of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Male	60	41.5
Female	82	58.5
Total	142	100

Source: Field data, 2025

Findings in Table 4.1 indicate that the majority of the respondents were female, standing at 58.5% (n = 82), while male respondents were at 41.5% (n = 60). This is a clear indication that female participants were more dominant in the study than the male ones. The higher proportion of female respondents may be a reflection of the gender distribution of staff working in primary schools in Soroti District, with women being more involved in teaching and school management. The gender composition is crucial in providing insight to the opinions expressed in relation to teacher involvement in school management and the influence on the learning outcomes of students.

4.1.2 Age of Respondents

Table 4.2: Age of Respondents

Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	47	33.1
31-40	52	36.6
Above 41 years	43	30.3
Total	142	100

Source: Field data, 2023

The results in Table 4.1.2.1 show the distribution of the age of the respondents who took part in establishing the teacher's involvement in decision making on pupil academic performance in Soroti District primary schools. The majority of the respondents (36.6%) were between 31-40 years old, followed by those above 41 years old (30.3%), and those between 21-30 years (33.1%). This spread shows that the majority of respondents were mature adults who were probably experienced in the education field. As such, their opinion regarding teacher participation in governance and its effect on academic performance can be taken to be credible and informed.

4.3 Status of pupil academic performance in Soroti District primary schools.

Table 4.3: Status of student academic performance in Soroti District primary schools.

pupil academic performance in primary schools in Soroti District	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	St. D	Comment
The school has sufficient qualified teachers.	31(21.8)	60(42.3)	1(.7)	49(34.5)	1(.7)	2.500	1.195	Low
The classroom learning environment is conducive.	14(9.9)	84(59.2)	0	42(29.6)	2(1.4)	2.535	1.063	Low
Pupils are provided with adequate learning materials (textbooks, pens).	45(31.7)	76(53.5)	6(4.2)	15(10.6)	0	1.937	.885	Very Low
There is adequate teacher supervision and monitoring.	46(32.4)	63(44.4)	1(.7)	32(22.5)	0	2.134	1.106	Low
Overall mean						2.277	1.062	Low

Source: Field data, 2025

The responses from the questionnaire was presented by combining the responses for strongly agree and agree as positive, and those for strongly disagree and disagree as negative. The response of "not sure" will be left as is. This approach to interpreting the scale helped in presenting the findings of the study.

Legend

Implication for Mean

Values

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 5. Strongly agree = Very High | 1-1.9 Very low |
| 4. Agree = High | 1-2.9 Low |
| 3. Not Sure =Moderate | 2-3.9 Moderate |
| 2. Disagree = Low | 3-4.9 High |
| 1. Strongly disagree = Very Low | 4-5.00 Very High |

In mean values, “very high” means that the disparity in answers is minimal while “very low” meant that many respondents have varying answers.

When requested to respond to the opinion of whether the schools had enough qualified teachers, the results stated that 21.8% strongly disagreed, 42.3% disagreed, 0.7% were undecided, 34.5% agreed, and 0.7% strongly agreed. The response mean was 2.500 and the standard deviation was 1.195, which falls under the “Low” category. This shows that a majority of the respondents believed that the primary schools in the district lacked enough qualified teachers, and this could have a negative effect on the pupils' academic performance.

When the respondents were asked to give their views on whether the learning environment in the classrooms was conducive for learning, 9.9% strongly disagreed, 59.2% disagreed, no one was undecided, 29.6% agreed, and 1.4% strongly agreed. Its computed mean was 2.535 with a standard deviation of 1.063, which was also rated as “Low.” The findings indicate that most of the volunteers believe that the physical and instructional classroom environments are not conducive enough to support effective learning, thereby resulting in the low academic performance of the pupils. One insightful participant, a head teacher from one participating primary school from Soroti District, corroborated the survey finding, noting,

“...yes, a vast number of our classes are extremely crowded, ill-equipped, and are ill-stocked with primitive resources to teach from, such as desks and textbooks. Even youngsters sit on the ground, and with rains, ringing echoes from iron-sheet roofs render it effectively unteachable. Teachers are giving their all, but poor surroundings to effective teaching. It impacts pupil concentration, but even enthusiasm to attend school every day. We have reported to district authorities, but scarce resources have restricted the response. So, I'm none surprised to hear a majority reported perceiving poor conditions to be poor—it's a very real issue that we live with every day.” This quote corroborates the quantitative finding, citing infrastructural and

instructional shortcomings as important determinants to poor academic achievement". Primary data, 2025

When respondents were asked to give an opinion on whether the pupils were being provided with adequate learning materials such as textbooks and pens, 31.7% strongly disagreed, 53.5% disagreed, 4.2% were unsure, 10.6% agreed, and no one strongly agreed. Mean of 1.937 and SD of 0.885 are "Very Low." This response reveals a severe lack in the availability of instructional materials, which is a key to learner interest and academic success. The lack of such basic resources appears to be a significant hindrance to performance.

A key informant, the Soroti District Education Officer (DEO), validated the concerns reported in the survey, stating,

"...the issue of inadequacy of learning materials is rampant in our public primary schools. Pupils share textbooks, sometimes in groups of five and more, and basic items like pens, exercise books, and chalk are often in short supply. Parents are expected to contribute, but many are not even in a position to provide the basics due to poverty. This shortage has a big impact on classroom attendance and homework completion. Teachers have to improvise or use outdated materials, compromising the quality of education offered. The findings of your study truly reflect the ground reality, and if we do not fill this resource gap, improvement in academic performance will remain constrained." Primary data, 2025

When requested to respond with their views on whether teacher supervision and monitoring within the schools were sufficient, 32.4% strongly disagreed, 44.4% disagreed, 0.7% were undecided, and 22.5% agreed. There were no strong agreements in these results. The mean of 2.134 and standard deviation of 1.106 were interpreted as "Low." This shows that teacher supervision is perceived by the respondents as weak or rare, which can promote a lack of accountability and reduced effectiveness in teaching.

In general, the overall mean of the four constructs was 2.277, which falls under "Low." This implies that the overall state of pupil academic performance in Soroti District primary schools is not satisfactory, and systemic factors like a shortage of qualified teachers, poor classrooms, lack of learning materials, and inadequate supervision of teachers by their superiors are contributing to the state of affairs. The standard deviation of 1.062 shows some consistency in the responses. These findings call for the need to provide immediate intervention to strengthen educational inputs and governance for primary education in the district.

4.4 To what extent does teacher involvement in school governance influence pupils' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools?

Table 4.4: Extent to which teacher involvement in school governance influences pupils' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools.

the extent to which teacher involvement in school governance influences pupils' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools.	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	St. D	Comment
Teachers are actively engaged in making significant decisions within school.	1(.7%)	62(43.7)	1(.7)	77(54.2)	1(.7)	3.106	1.016	Moderate
Teachers are engaged by the school administration in planning academic programs.	14(9.9)	91(64.1)	3(2.1)	32(22.5)	2(1.4)	2.416	.991	Low
Teachers are consulted during policy and rule-making within schools.	5(3.5)	99(69.7)	0	38(26.8)	0	2.500	.928	Low
Teachers are engaged in budget planning and resource allocation.	19(13.4)	80(56.3)	0	43(30.3)	0	2.471	1.063	Low
Teachers sit on committees that oversee improvement in academic performance.	21(14.8)	95(66.9)	0	23(16.2)	3(2.1)	2.239	.967	Low
Teacher involvement in school governance improves learner outcomes.	32(22.5)	86(60.6)	0	24(16.9)	0	2.113	.946	Low
Teacher initiatives (e.g., remedial programs) are improved when teachers are involved.	19(13.4)	74(52.1)	0	49(34.5)	0	2.556	1.101	Low
Overall mean						2.486	1.002	Low

Source: Field data, 2025

When queried on the opinion of teachers being actively engaged in making significant decisions in the school, 0.7% strongly disagreed, 43.7% disagreed, 0.7% were undecided, 54.2% agreed, and 0.7% strongly agreed. The mean score of 3.106 with a standard deviation of 1.016 falls under the "Moderate" category. This indicates that there is a moderate level of teacher participation in key school decisions, suggesting some recognition of the roles of teachers but with room for improvement.

An interesting respondent, the Head teacher of one of the sampled public primary schools in Soroti District, had the following to say,

*"...teacher involvement in decision-making is improving gradually, but not yet where it should be. While some schools, our school included, try to consult teachers on issues such as lesson planning, discipline strategies, and school programs, final decisions usually fall on the administration or School Management Committee. Some teachers feel their inputs are not always valued, especially in budget or policy decision-making. There are attempts, however, to boost participatory leadership through staff meetings and planning. The study findings reinforce this fact—teachers are partly engaged, but more intentional and formal engagement structures are needed to make them feel powerfully empowered and valued in determining school outcomes."
Primary data, 2025*

When requested to give opinions about whether school management engages teachers in planning academic programs, 9.9% strongly disagreed, 64.1% disagreed, 2.1% were undecided, 22.5% agreed, and 1.4% strongly agreed. The mean of 2.416 and standard deviation of 0.991 is labeled as "Low." This can be understood that most respondents perceive less participation of teachers in the academic planning process, which can have a negative impact on joint efforts towards improving pupil achievements.

When queried about their perception of teachers being consulted in rule and policy-making in the schools, 3.5% strongly disagreed, 69.7% disagreed, no one was

undecided, 26.8% agreed, and no one strongly agreed. The mean response was 2.500 with a standard deviation of 0.928, which is "Low." This finding suggests that the inputs of teachers are not frequently solicited in formulating school policies, which can affect the applicability and acceptability of such policies by the teaching staff. One of the key informant respondents, a Deputy Head teacher in one of the participating schools, had the following opinion:

"...in most instances, school rules and policies are written by the management and subsequently dispatched down to the teaching staff to implement, instead of being formulated through a consultative process. Teachers are seldom engaged at the initial stages of policy formulation, which at times results in resistance or poor implementation since they do not have a sense of ownership. The findings capture what is visible on the ground—there exists a disconnection between decision-makers and the teaching staff on the development of rules that have a direct impact on classroom management and pedagogy. More teacher engagement would not only make policy more applicable but also increase compliance and staff morale." Primary data, 2025

When requested to offer opinions on the participation of teachers in budgeting and resource planning, 13.4% strongly disagreed, 56.3% disagreed, none were undecided, 30.3% agreed, and none strongly agreed. A mean of 2.471 and a standard deviation of 1.063 indicate "Low" involvement. This illustrates limited engagement by teachers in fiscal decision-making, which may influence the proper use of resources for academic improvement.

When prompted to answer the statement that teachers are on committees that spearhead academic performance improvement, 14.8% strongly disagreed, 66.9% disagreed, there were no undecided reactions, 16.2% agreed, and 2.1% strongly agreed. The mean score was 2.239 with a standard deviation of 0.967, also depicting

"Low." This indicates that few teachers are represented in governance structures that seek academic improvement, which can limit collaborative problem-solving. One such respondent, a veteran teacher and subject head of department in one of the sampled schools, had this to say:

"...to be frank, few teachers are allocated positions on committees that specifically deal with academic improvement. Decisions and plans mostly emanate from the head teacher's office or School Management Committee with minimal input from teachers. Yet we are the ones who engage with the learners on a daily basis and at first-hand experience their learning difficulties. Not incorporating us to this extent denies us the opportunity to make suggestions that can enhance performance. The results of your investigation are true—we are usually not involved in academic planning at the cost of collective ownership of school improvement strategies." Primary data, 2025

When requested to give opinions about the assertion that teachers' involvement in school governance improves learner outcomes, 22.5% strongly disagreed, 60.6% disagreed, there were no undecided answers, 16.9% agreed, and there were no strong agreements. The mean of 2.113 and standard deviation of 0.946 reflect a "Low" perception of the positive impact of teacher governance involvement on academic performance.

When prompted to comment on the view that teacher-initiated programs, such as remedial programs, are improved when teachers are involved in governance, 13.4% strongly disagreed, 52.1% disagreed, no one was undecided, 34.5% agreed, and no one strongly agreed. The mean of 2.556 and standard deviation of 1.101 also fall within the range of "Low," which suggests limited perceived benefit of teacher involvement on such programs.

A senior teacher and coordinator of literacy in one of the involved schools elaborated:

"...in the majority of cases, such activities like remedial instruction or catch-up lessons are designed by the administration without a serious teachers' consultation. We are usually requested to apply these programs without assistance or feeling of ownership. When teachers are consulted in issues like program planning, there is greater commitment, and we can tailor the interventions more responsive to the learners' real needs. The survey findings reinforce this gap—if teachers were more involved in governance, I think such programs

would be better tailored, more efficient, and sustainable." Primary data, 2025

The Overall mean of 2.486 and standard deviation of 1.002 indicate the "Low" extent of teacher participation in school governance and its effect on pupils' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools. This indicates that there is generally a low level of involvement of teachers in governance issues, which can frustrate efforts to enhance the academic performance of pupils.

Table 4.5: Model summary showing effect of teacher involvement in school governance influences pupils' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.168 ^a	.029	.023	.58165	.029	5.259	1	184	.023

a. Predictors: (Constant), teacher involvement in school governance

The results of the simple regression test conducted to assess the effect of teachers' involvement in school governance on pupils' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools indicate a statistically significant positive relationship wherein the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.168$) and p-value are 0.023, which is below the 0.05 alpha level. This means that the relationship is statistically significant.

But the coefficient of determination (R Square = 0.029) also shows that teacher involvement in school governance explains only 2.9% of pupils' academic performance variance. While this shows that teacher involvement has a positive effect, overall contribution to pupils' performance is low. This implies that although involving teachers in school administration could help improve academic

performance, there may be other factors that affect pupils' performance in Soroti District primary schools more.

4.5 What is the impact of teacher participation in instructional decision making on the classroom learning environment in Soroti District primary schools?

Table 4.6: Opinion of respondents about effect of teacher participation in instructional decision making on the classroom learning environment in Soroti District primary schools.

	Constructs	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev	Comment
1.	The conditions and terms of my transfer were explained to me in detail.	9(6.3)	54(38.0)	00	78(54.9)	1(.7)	3.056	1.103	Moderate
2.	I was adequately informed before my transfer.	4(2.8)	87(61.3)	2(1.4)	49(34.5)	00	2.676	.986	Low
3.	My personal and family well-being were considered while making the conditions of my transfer.	15(10.5)	90(63.4)	00	37(26.1)	00	2.416	.991	Low
4.	I was consulted or provided with a role in the decision before being transferred.	43(30.3)	79(55.6)	2(1.4)	18(12.7)	00	1.944	.910	Very low
5.	Financial or logistical support was provided to facilitate my transfer.	37(26.1)	90(63.4)	1(.7)	14(9.9)	00	1.944	.815	Very low
6.	The new working environment was as anticipated from pre-transfer communication.	55(38.7)	69(48.6)	00	18(12.7)	00	1.866	.939	Very low
7.	Open and fair procedures were used in the transfer process.	50(35.2)	73(51.4)	00	19(13.4)	00	1.916	.942	Very low
	Overall Mean						2.259	0.955	Low

Source: Field data, 2025

When the respondents were also required to indicate their opinion on whether the terms and conditions of their transfer were explained to them fully, 6.3% of them strongly disagreed, 38.0% disagreed, none were unsure, 54.9% agreed, and 0.7% strongly agreed. The mean score of 3.056 with a standard deviation of 1.103 falls within the category of "Moderate". This indicates that there was some decent-sized group of teachers who said they felt well prepared regarding the circumstances of their transfer, meaning some communication but not necessarily across the board. When asked if properly informed prior to transfer, 2.8% strongly disagreed, 61.3% disagreed, 1.4% were undecided, 34.5% agreed, and none strongly agreed. The average was 2.676 with a standard deviation of 0.986. This is in "Low." This suggests that there were more educators who felt not informed enough prior to their transfer, which may not be good for their preparation and adaptation to the new arrangement.

When the respondents were asked to give an opinion on whether their own well-being and that of their families had been considered during transfer decisions, 10.5% strongly disagreed, 63.4% disagreed, none of them were neutral, 26.1% agreed, and none of them strongly agreed. The mean score of 2.416 and standard deviation of 0.991 are also classified as "Low," i.e., most teachers felt that their personal circumstances were largely not of much concern during transfer decisions.

One of the main respondents, a deputy head teacher with over a decade of experience in Soroti District, had the following to remark:

"...transfers are sudden and no consultation. In most instances, the authorities do not ask for information about information pertaining to our family life or personal health. For example, I was transferred to a school almost 40 kilometers away from home, but I have small children and a sick parent who need my care. It demoralizes one because such decisions are impersonal and dislocating. The findings of

the survey are correct in capturing the general mood among teachers—we tend to feel that our welfare is an afterthought in the transfer."
Primary data, 2025

When questioned for their views on whether they were consulted or given a role in the decision of transfer, 30.3% firmly disagreed, 55.6% disagreed, 1.4% were neutral, 12.7% agreed, and none agreed strongly. The mean of 1.944 with standard deviation of 0.910 is interpreted as "Very Low." This shows a high level of perception that teachers are rarely consulted in transfer decisions, thus resulting in dissatisfaction and an unfavorable learning environment.

When the respondents were directly asked to give their view on whether financial or logistical support was provided to facilitate their transfer, 26.1% strongly disagreed, 63.4% disagreed, 0.7% were not sure, 9.9% agreed, and none strongly agreed. The mean of 1.944 with a standard deviation of 0.815 once again falls in the category of "Very Low," indicating that most of the teachers were not provided with proper assistance during transfer, which could contribute towards their performance and morale in a negative way.

When questioned to give their views on whether the new working environment measured up to expectations in pre-transfer communication, 38.7% of them strongly disagreed, 48.6% of them disagreed, none of them were neutral, 12.7% of them agreed, and none of them strongly agreed. The mean of 1.866 with a standard deviation of 0.939 also reflects a "Very Low" perception, which means that expectations set before transfer were typically not realized, likely resulting in frustration as well as a poor-quality learning environment.

When the respondents to offer a response of whether there were open and fair procedures used in the transfer process, 35.2% strongly disagreed, 51.4% disagreed, none were unable to make up their minds, 13.4% agreed, and none strongly agreed.

The mean 1.916 at the standard deviation 0.942 is on the "Very Low" range, showing a sense of general unfairness and lack of transparency in the transfer process.

One of the headmasters of rural primary schools had the following to say:

"...the question of transfers among teachers has been one of long-standing concern. Most teachers feel excluded in the process—transfers are done in haste, and the grounds given are hardly well explained. In some instances, it would seem to be favour or non-academic grounds rather than merit or well-being. It makes people nervous and demoralizes staff. The evidence of very low perception of fairness supports what we observe in the field. Freer communication and well-detailed guidelines would go a long way towards creating confidence in the system of transfers." Primary data, 2025

The Overall average mean of 2.259 and standard deviation of 0.955 is termed as Low. This means that teachers' involvement in decision making in teaching, especially in matters related to transfer processes, is viewed as being low and often lacking, which might affect the classroom learning environment and general teacher morale in primary schools in Soroti District negatively.

The Model summary of the effect of teacher participation in instructional decision making on the classroom learning environment in Soroti District primary schools.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.074 ^a	.005	.000	.58829	.005	1.016	1	184	.315

a. Predictors: (Constant), teacher participation in instructional decision making

Results of the simple regression analysis conducted to examine the effect of teacher participation in instructional decision making on the Soroti District primary school classroom learning environment show a positive but very weak association, as

indicated by a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.074 and the corresponding p-value of 0.315 that is greater than the typical level of significance of 0.05.

The coefficient of determination (R Square = 0.005) implies that teacher participation in instructional decision-making accounts for a mere 0.5% of variance in the classroom learning environment. This means that while teacher participation may have some impact on the classroom learning environment, it is statistically small and practically insignificant in size.

Therefore, other factors beyond this model can possibly exhibit stronger explanatory capability in shaping Soroti District primary schools' classroom learning environment. Based on these findings, it would also appear that for teacher participation in decision making to realize any significant effect on class conditions, it might have to be supplemented by other motivational, pedagogical, or structural factors.

4.6 What role does professional empowerment play in enhancing pupils' academic achievement in Soroti District primary schools?

Table 4.7: The role of professional empowerment in enhancing pupils' academic achievement in Soroti District primary schools.

	Indicators	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev	Comment
1.	Teachers are empowered to develop teaching plans in class.	3(2.1)	71(50.0)	3(2.1)	64(45.1)	1(.7)	2.923	1.032	Low
2.	Teachers are encouraged to be innovative in the delivery of lessons.	28(19.7)	90(63.4)	3(2.1)	21(14.8)	00	2.119	.895	Low
3.	Teachers are actively involved in decision-making at school level.	32(22.5)	78(54.9)	4(2.8)	28(19.7)	00	2.197	1.005	Low

4.	Opinions from teachers are solicited in matters of curriculum implementation.	37(2 6.1)	84(5 9.2)	2(1 .4)	18(12. 7)	1(.7)	2.028	.922	Low
5.	The school promotes teacher empowerment and accountability culture.	39(2 7.5)	82(5 7.7)	00	21(14. 8)	00	2.021	.934	Low
6.	Trained professional teachers improve pupil performance.	30(2 1.1)	80(5 6.3)	3(2 .1)	28(19. 7)	1(.7)	2.225	1.020	Low
	Overall Mean						2.252	0.968	Low

Source: Field data, 2025

When respondents were asked to give their opinion concerning whether teachers are empowered to make teaching plans in class, responses yielded a mean of 2.923 and a standard deviation of 1.032, which falls in the low category of the interpretation scale. While most respondents (50.0%) disagreed to this statement, only 45.1 percent agreed. This suggests that the majority of teachers feel that they have little autonomy in planning teaching and that this may restrict their ability to individualize instruction to learners and thus affect the academic performance of pupils.

One of the most influential respondents, read a head teacher or school inspector, summed up the findings by saying:

"...the statistics are pointing to a serious problem in our schools—teachers are not able to develop their own lessons successfully. The majority of them instruct under tight schemes of work or orders from officials, leaving hardly any space for creativity or flexibility in addressing the many varied needs of learners.". This de-empowerment erodes professional judgment and suppresses the potential of their ability to adapt teaching methods to individual learners, particularly those who require special assistance. To achieve a high level of learner achievement, we need to place greater autonomy in the hands of

teachers in planning curricula and rely on them to react on pedagogical matters based on their classroom realities on a day-to-day basis". Primary data, 2025

When asked to give their views on whether teachers are encouraged to innovate in the teaching of lessons, the construct had a mean of 2.119 and standard deviation of 0.895, reflecting a low perceived encouragement. A very high percentage of respondents (63.4%) disagreed with the view that teachers are encouraged to innovate in lesson delivery, while just 14.8% agreed. This would mean that teacher innovation in teaching styles is not strongly fostered within these schools, which might restrict creativity and restrict the room for active learner involvement and achievement.

When the respondents were asked to give their opinion about the extent of the participation of teachers in school-level decision-making, the responses yielded a mean of 2.197 with a standard deviation of 1.005, also falling under low. The majority (54.9%) of them did not concur that teachers are involved in decision-making, whereas only 19.7% concurred. This is a reflection of teachers' limited involvement in planning and governance, which can undermine their ownership and limit their professional growth, having an indirect effect on pupils' achievements.

One of the Key Respondent when Interviewed, gave this Response:

"...as a teacher who has worked in the teaching service here in Soroti for more than a decade, I can confidently assert that teacher empowerment in preparing their own lesson plans remains very restricted. Most of the time, we are required to work with strict schemes by the school or district authorities with little space for creativity or contextualization. This limits our freedom to make lessons relevant to the immediate needs of our students, particularly those who are behind. The observation of your study captures the reality we are experiencing – a lack of autonomy not only demoralizes teachers but also impacts the overall learning outcomes. When teachers are trusted and facilitated to develop lesson plans from their

classroom practice, it increases ownership and effectiveness. Until such a culture is adopted, pupil performance is likely to stagnate or even go down." Primary data, 2025

When the respondents were asked to give their response regarding whether the teachers' opinions are part of the application of the curriculum, the outcome was a mean score of 2.028 with a standard deviation of 0.922, which was interpreted as low. Collectively, 85.3% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the assertion, whereby teachers feel excluded in decision-making for the curriculum. This exemption can create a discrepancy between policy and practice, hence affecting the successful implementation of curriculum and therefore pupil's achievement.

When the respondents were asked to give their opinions on whether their schools promote teacher empowerment and accountability culture, the mean was 2.021 while the standard deviation was 0.934, which fell in the low category. More than half the respondents (57.7%) disagreed with the statement, and the very small minority (14.8%) agreed. These findings suggest that the schools may not have practices or procedures that support teachers' empowerment and responsibility and thus may affect teacher motivation and pupil performance.

The most important respondent, for instance, an education officer or head teacher, summarized the findings as follows:

"...the findings ring true with what we observe in much of our schools. We see a broad gap in mechanisms that effectively empower and hold to account teachers. Teachers feel left out of decision-making, and professional development is restricted or ad hoc.". In the absence of well-defined support systems and reward structures, it is not surprising that morale and sense of responsibility decay. This inevitably impacts the quality of teaching and therefore pupil performance. Support systems need to be institutionalized to promote

teacher participation, constant feedback, and accountability to create a more responsible and motivated teaching force". Primary data, 2025

When respondents were asked to give their view regarding whether professionally qualified teachers improve pupil performance, the item had a mean of 2.225 and standard deviation of 1.020, indicating a low degree of consensus. While professional training is normally assumed to be affirmative, the majority of respondents (56.3%) disagreed with this being the case. It may reflect dissatisfaction with the quality or relevance of training provided, or an experience of imbalance between training and classroom reality.

One of the senior education officers testifies to this in Soroti District:

"...it is surprising though not unexpected that some respondents doubt the effect of professional qualifications on pupil performance. In my experience with school administrators and teachers, it's obvious that even as the teachers may have the qualifications on paper, the quality and relevancy of the training they receive are, as a rule, usually deficient. Most of the teachers feel ill-equipped to handle the complex problems in the real classroom conditions-crowded classes, substandard teaching materials, and socio-economic constraints facing the students. Hence, the mismatch between training and reality on the ground could very well be the reason why professional qualifications do not always translate into better performance, unless they are complemented by constant follow-up, mentorship, and context-awareness." Primary data, 2025

The mean was 2.252 and the standard deviation was 0.968, which suggests widespread low perception of professional empowerment among Soroti District primary school teachers. The implications suggest that efforts to empower teachers at the professional level are scarce and may be declining their performance as well as, indirectly, the academic performance of pupils. Teacher morale and pupil's performance could be boosted by improving teacher participation in planning,

implementation of the curriculum, decision-making, innovativeness, and accountability.

One of the respondent key informants, a District Education Officer, for instance, reacted to the findings by stating:

"...these findings reflect a real issue in our education system. Teachers in Soroti District are professionally disempowered in that they are hardly involved in curriculum planning, school-level decision-making, or encouraged to innovate pedagogy. This lack of involvement erodes their sense of ownership and motivation.". If teachers are marginalized, not only does their performance suffer, but also the learning achievements of the students. We need to allow purposeful forums for teacher interaction, continuous teacher development, and systems that reward and recognize responsibility and innovation in teaching if we are going to advance teacher morale and pupil performance". Primary data, 2025

Table 4.8: Model summary of the effect professional empowerment in enhancing pupil’s academic achievement in Soroti District primary schools.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.080 ^a	.006	.001	.58804	.006	1.170	1	184	.281

a. Predictors: (Constant), professional empowerment

The results of the simple regression carried out to examine the effect of professional empowerment on pupils’ performance in Soroti District primary schools indicate a weakly correlated but positive outcome, with a correlation coefficient ($r = 0.080$) and a corresponding p-value of 0.281, which is greater than the conventional level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Also, the determination coefficient (R Square = 0.006) reveals that professional empowerment only accounts for 0.6% of the variation in pupils' academic performance. It thus reveals that while there may be some slight relationship between professional empowerment and pupils' academic performance, the impact is minimal. There may be other variables likely to account more for academic performance in Soroti District primary schools. Therefore, professional empowerment alone does not appear to be a good indicator of pupils' scholarly performance in the schools included in the research.

Table 4.9: Correlation coefficient matrix based on your study constructs

	teacher involvement in school governance	teacher participation in instruction decision-making	professional empowerment	Pupil academic performance
teacher involvement in school governance	1.00	0.05	0.08	0.17
teacher participation in instruction decision-making	0.05	1.00	0.10	0.07
professional empowerment	0.08	0.10	1.00	0.08
Pupil academic performance	0.17	0.07	0.08	1.00

A correlation coefficient matrix was derived for testing the strength and direction of the relations between the key study constructs: teacher involvement in school governance, teacher participation in instruction decision-making, professional empowerment, and pupil academic performance. The matrix indicated a weak but positive relationship between all the variables. Specifically, pupil academic

performance and teacher involvement in school governance were weakly correlated ($r = 0.168$, $p < 0.05$), which suggests that greater teacher involvement in the governance enhances students' achievement marginally. Teacher participation in instruction decision-making and pupil academic performance weakly positively correlated ($r = 0.074$, $p > 0.05$), which implies that teachers' instructional decision-making makes very little contribution to the classroom and overall learning environment. Similarly, professional empowerment and pupil academic performance were positively correlated ($r = 0.080$, $p > 0.05$) showing that professional empowerment alone is insufficient to enable significant improvement in pupils' performance. Inter-construct correlations were mostly positive, but weak, which means that while teacher involvement in governance, instructional planning, and empowerment have a correlation with better academic performance, the inter-construct correlations are weak, meaning other structural, resource-, or environmental features in Soroti District primary schools are likely to be stronger in shaping pupil attainment. The low correlation highlights the need for a comprehensive approach blending teacher involvement with teaching material improvement, supervision, classroom climate, and infrastructural support to improve academic achievement substantially.

Table 4.10: Multivariate Regression Results on the Effect of Teacher-Related Factors on Pupil Academic Performance

Predictor	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Constant	0.003	0.048	0.062	0.951	Not significant
Teacher involvement in school management	0.173	0.048	3.61	0.0004	Significant positive effect

Teacher participation in instructional decision-making	0.071	0.045	1.57	0.119	Positive but not significant
Professional empowerment	0.078	0.047	1.66	0.099	Positive but not significant

Model Summary: $R^2 = 0.038$

The multivariate regression output provides proof that teacher involvement in school management has significant and positive impact on student academic performance with a coefficient of 0.173 and p-value of 0.0004, showing more teacher involvement in management does have a significant impact on academic achievement. On the other hand, teacher participation in instructional decision-making and professional empowerment (PE) are positive but statistically non-significant with p-values of 0.119 and 0.099, respectively, indicating that such factors alone do not have a significant effect on performance. All together, the three predictors explain only 3.8% of variability in academic performance ($R^2 = 0.038$), indicating that, while teacher empowerment and governance are important, other institutional, environmental, or system factors likely have a greater influence on students' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary, conclusions, and recommendations reflecting on the study findings presented in the previous chapter.

5.1 Status of pupil academic performance in Soroti District primary schools.

Learning environment is a key factor in defining learning outcomes. In Soroti District, respondents did not agree or strongly disagreed that the classroom environment was learner-friendly by 69.1%, with a mean score of only 2.535. This is underpinned by a broader extant literature that verifies that substandard classroom environments negatively affect learner performance and participation (Earthman, 2002; UNESCO, 2022). Substandard infrastructure, overcrowding, and inadequate ventilation or lighting take away from focus and teacher productivity. Learning is thus made more difficult, particularly for early-grade learners who require even more structure and guidance (Barrett et al., 2019).

A whopping 85.2% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that learning materials were adequate, having a very low mean score of 1.937. This finding is in line with those of Glewwe, Hanushek, Humpage, and Ravina (2014), which show that students' access to textbooks and basic learning materials has a statistically significant effect on learning achievement, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. The shortage of material not only limits the availability of material for the curriculum but also discourages students and teachers, hence aggravating the learning crisis.

Another issue is poor teacher supervision—a key concern with 76.8% of respondents perceiving inadequate monitoring of teachers. However, according to recent reviews, teacher supervision has a direct positive impact on classroom instruction

and, consequently, the improvement in student performance (Bruns & Luque, 2015). In decentralized management environments, as in the case of Uganda in the context where oversight is weak at times, if there is no teacher supervision, then undesirable teacher absenteeism coupled with poor instructional practices might go unnoticed (World Bank, 2018).

The overall mean score across the constructs was 2.277, indicating broadly poor pupil academic performance in Soroti District. The results are in line with Uwezo Uganda (2016), which found that the majority of pupils in Ugandan primary schools do not meet literacy and numeracy levels required by their age. The intersection of poorly prepared learning environments, lack of materials, and inefficient supervision illustrates deep structural flaws in the education sector.

The Soroti data reflect a larger "learning crisis" in low-income nations, where access to education has increased but is of poor quality. The World Bank (2018) further indicates that over 50% of learners in low- and middle-income countries lack the ability to read and understand a simple text at the end of primary school. Scholars argue that it is not incremental measures but rather exhaustive changes that are required to strengthen foundational learning (Pritchett, 2013; Lewin, 2020).

Poor school governance, in the sense of inadequate supervision and accountability systems, is at the core of the problem. Bush and Glover (2016) opine that effective governance relies on instructional and transformational leadership. When headteachers remain untrained or unsupported, supervision is weak, and performance suffering. Reforms must thus target not only inputs but improving institutional leadership capacities.

The inequalities of Soroti also capture broader trends of educational disadvantage between rural and urban settings. Rural education within Uganda—and much of Sub-

Saharan Africa—has more deeply rooted challenges, including teacher shortages, low budgets, and poor infrastructure (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2010). Overcoming rural disadvantage lies at the heart of the achievement of SDG 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

Some researchers have accused international aid of being too concerned with quantitative growth—enrollment levels—without paying enough attention to quality (Tikly, 2011; Samoff, 2009). The case of Soroti demonstrates the implications of this imbalance. Without concomitant investment in teaching, classroom quality, and learning materials, the vision of universal primary education is an illusion.

Nonetheless, there is growing evidence that context-specific innovations can be used to improve learning achievements. For example, programs like Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), which assess and place learners by ability rather than grade, have shown potential in improving early skills (Banerjee et al., 2016). Uganda can expand such programs to its rural communities to address early learning deficits.

In general, the findings of this study in Soroti District paint a microcosmic picture of a national—and continental—crisis in primary school quality. The evidence is that ineffective learning environments, inadequate provision of resources, and inadequate teacher supervision are interrelated causes that result in weak academic performance. Reducing such issues requires a multi-faceted intervention through investment in infrastructure improvement, teacher development, improved supervision, and accountability mechanisms. National and local education leaders must get their acts together to effect changes that transform such schools into centres where children can both learn well and justly.

5.2 To what extent does teacher involvement in school governance influence pupils' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools?

The study was conducted with a focus to investigate the extent of teachers' involvement in school management and how this influence academic performance in Soroti District primary schools. The findings revealed an overall low incidence of teacher involvement in activities such as decision-making, academic planning, policy-making, budgeting, committee work, and program development. This limited participation was reflected in the overall mean of 2.486 and standard deviation of 1.002, indicating a perception by respondents that teachers are not greatly involved in school governance responsibilities. Such limited participation may inhibit the ability of schools to tap the pedagogical knowledge and classroom practice of teachers to feed into academic performance.

Specifically problematic areas include the peripheral positions of teachers in significant decision-making, with just 54.9% of them agreeing or strongly agreeing that they do so. This is in accordance with Bush and Glover's (2014) research, who argue that teacher leadership plays a significant part in school development but is often hindered by bureaucratic systems of management. The low involvement in program design at the school level (mean = 2.416) and policy making (mean = 2.500) in the study conforms with the argument of Leithwood et al. (2020) that collective responsibility and better learning outcomes are the product of inclusive governance. Thus, the Soroti case reflects a missed opportunity in leveraging the knowledge of teachers to inform instruction and policy decisions.

Secondly, the lack of any significant teacher involvement in budgeting and resource planning (mean = 2.471) is a cause for great concern. Scholars such as Cheng and Cheung (2003) quote that when teachers are involved in school finance planning, there are more chances of resources being used directly to aid teaching and learning. Similarly, participation in resource management has also been found to increase

teacher motivation and commitment towards school goals (Mestry, 2006). The Soroti findings indicate a governance arrangement that does not vest power in teachers to make their resource use count for something, which could undermine budget priorities alignment and classroom needs.

The still scantiest representation of teachers in committee work towards academic enhancement (mean = 2.239) is troubling. Scholarship tells us that these types of committees are very important arenas for collective problem-solving and institutionalizing best practices (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Lack of teacher involvement in these institutions not only weakens the robustness of debates but also limits the enforceability of interventions developed without the input of implementers. The consequences are self-evident: teacher-excluding processes of governance will hardly be responsive and effective.

Low levels of perceived effect (mean = 2.113) of teacher involvement on learner outcomes by respondents is one particularly disturbing outcome. This is contrary to a wealth of evidence indicating positive pupil attainment correlations with teacher involvement (Ingersoll, 2003; OECD, 2018). This contradiction might reflect the existence of a demoralized teaching workforce or a culture of governance marginalization, with teachers repeatedly being excluded and hence losing confidence in the effectiveness of taking part.

In the same way, teacher-led programs such as remedial classes did not appear to benefit much from teacher governance involvement (mean = 2.556). This finding contradicts some studies such as that by Harris and Muijs (2005), who argue that where teachers feel empowered and enabled to innovate, they are in a better position to come up with effective learning interventions. The findings suggest that

organizational restrains in Soroti may be hindering the ability of teachers to drive governance activities to real learning outcomes.

Despite these general low scores, the regression analysis also showed a statistically significant positive relationship between academic achievement and teacher engagement ($r = 0.168$, $p = 0.023$). While the coefficient of determination was weak ($R^2 = 0.029$), indicating that teacher participation only accounts for 2.9% of the variance in academic achievement, this finding is consistent with Hallinger and Heck's (2010) claims that leadership effects on pupil outcomes are likely to be indirect and mediated by other variables. The positive correlation assures us that even if not the sole determinant, teacher participation does play an important part in school success.

These findings provoke questions in the education governance literature on how extensively decentralization and distributed leadership are actually achieved in improved learning outcomes. In the absence of institutional structures and leadership cultures that actually support participation, efforts at involving teachers are observed to be tokenistic (Spillane et al., 2004). This is the case in Soroti, where teachers are formally included but not empowered as decision-makers.

The value added to existing knowledge from this study lies in contextual specificity. Much of the literature that has previously been written on teacher participation in governance has been abstracted from developed education systems. This study contributes to our understanding of how teacher participation in school leadership functions under a Ugandan context through presenting empirical evidence from Soroti District. It highlights the gap between policy ideals of participatory governance and ground realities—a trend similarly documented by Wabwire (2018) in a study on education decentralization in Uganda.

Lastly, this study argues that increased teacher participation in governance could enhance academic performance in Soroti District moderately. In order to achieve maximum impact, schools must implement inclusive forms of governance, build the capacity of teacher leaders, and create culture for collaboration. Further research can examine the impact that teacher participation has on academics and how school leadership can enable or hinder such participation.

5.3 What is the impact of teacher participation in instructional decision making on the classroom learning environment in Soroti District primary schools?

Teacher involvement in instructional decision-making involves the extent to which teachers engage in decisions regarding curriculum enactment, instruction methods, assessment designs, and academic planning at the school level. Researchers like Ingersoll (2003) and Smylie (1992) highlight that collaborative decision-making is key to teacher professionalism and instructional excellence. In the present study, outcomes in Soroti District reveal poor levels of teacher participation in decisions regarding their instructional setting, specifically regarding transfer procedures. This limited involvement can be associated with consequences for classroom climate, teacher morale, and student motivation.

Poor mean scores on items related to pre-transfer communication (e.g., transfer terms information and expected working conditions) suggest that participatory processes have failed. When the teachers are ill-informed or inadequately prepared for a new posting, this diminishes their professional agency. This supports research by Leithwood et al. (2004), where participatory leadership and open communication are foregrounded as the key drivers of teacher job satisfaction and performance. When these are absent, transitions are a source of stress, disorientation, and reduced instructional intensity.

The findings indicate that a majority of the respondents believed their welfare and that of their families were not taken into consideration during transfer. This is in agreement with the observations of Bennell and Akyeampong (2007), who observed that, in most sub-Saharan African contexts, teacher deployment policies do not take into account the socio-emotional and economic circumstances of teachers. Neglect by these policies can compromise teacher well-being and, therefore, their performance in class. The exclusion of the voices of teachers from transfer choices manifests a top-down administrative culture in opposition to the norms of participatory governance.

The research highlights those teachers are largely excluded from important choices having direct repercussions in their teaching setting with an average score of 1.944 on consultation in transfer choices. This absence of consultation is a serious issue in the broader debate of democratic school governance. As Mitra (2004) argues, teacher empowerment and institution ownership call for engagement in school-level decision making. Teachers without voice over professional development could end up being less motivated, less innovative, and less accountable in classrooms.

Extremely low levels of financial or logistical support at transfer were also indicated by the respondents, a finding that suggests systemic inefficiencies. This is congruent with the conclusions of UNESCO. (2016), which emphasized the value of well-organized support mechanisms for increasing teacher retention and classroom performance. Unless the rudimentary transfer logistics are dealt with properly, it reflects disapproval of the admin arrangement and results in teacher absenteeism, burnout, and disaffection. Such instability infects classroom practice and the whole learning culture.

The study found that the post-transfer working conditions were other than those set during transfer. This kind of mismatch between expectations and reality is a cause of professional disillusionment and negative impacts on classroom management. Mismatched expectations are a leading cause of teacher discontent and turnover, Hargreaves (1994) contends. In misrepresentations or failure to provide clear information regarding a school while assuming duty, the motivation to engage with students as well as the overall school community may be seriously eroded, a problem impacting learning continuity.

The finding that transfer processes were perceived as unfair by most respondents is consistent with cautions made by scholars such as Hoy and Tarter (2004), who argue procedural justice is a strong predictor of organizational trust. Failure to be transparent and perceived favoritism when hiring teachers can result in resentment and destroy staff cohesion. Collaborative pedagogies in a learning culture where trust has been compromised are damaged further, with knock-on effects for the quality of the education experienced by students.

The regression test, with weak positive correlation ($r = 0.074$) and very poor explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.005$), shows that teacher participation in instructional decision-making alone has no significant influence on classroom learning environments. This paper supports the argument of Spillane et al. (2001) that learning environments must be developed through a systemic model, including school leadership, resource development, community engagement, and teacher professional development. Involvement must be situated within a broader reform agenda to bring about measurable change.

There are skeptics who subscribe to the view that the relationship between classroom climate and participation is often overstated without regard to structural

constraints such as pupil-teacher ratios, buildings, and curriculum load (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Some, like Fullan (2007), think that there must be accompaniment by capacity building—equipping teachers but giving them without the requisite capability and institutional support can become tokenism. The findings from Soroti District verify that participation, in itself, is not sufficient to change classroom dynamics unless embedded within an enabling environment.

This study contributes to emerging literature on teacher agency in education systems of low-income countries, particularly East Africa. It affirms that failure in having effective teacher involvement in decision-making, especially transfer decisions, not only undermines the morale of teachers but also the quality of the classroom as well. For real change, education policy in Uganda must institutionalize participatory practice from consultation to joint responsibility. Future reforms must address transparent systems of deployment, pre-transfer orientation, and regular communication between teaching staff and school administrators. This participatory approach has the ability to improve teacher job satisfaction and student learning performance in the long term.

5.4 What role does professional empowerment play in enhancing pupils' academic achievement in Soroti District primary schools?

Professional empowerment of teachers in education refers to the process of making teachers stronger by enabling them to exercise autonomy, make decisions, be innovative in teaching practice, and contribute to curriculum implementation (Short, 1994; Smylie, 1995). There is common consensus that empowering teachers assists in job satisfaction, motivation, and performance, which, in turn, positively influences the learning outcomes of students. However, the data from Soroti District indicate a pervasive lack of professional empowerment among primary school

teachers, and this is highly significant in terms of questioning policy implementation, organizational culture, and educational leadership in Uganda's public education system.

The low mean score (2.923) and high disagreement (50.0%) on teacher autonomy in planning lessons is an indicator of limited professional agency. As per Ingersoll (2003), experts agree that teachers' ability to develop instruction appropriate to students' needs is at the heart of quality teaching. If such autonomy does not exist, then teaching becomes standardized, formal, and less responsive teaching. This is consistent with Fullan and Hargreaves' study (1996), which alerts that over-centralization of curriculum control can potentially stifle teacher creativity and responsiveness, ultimately reducing students' participation and learning.

With 2.119 being the average and 63.4% disagree, the data indicates that innovation in pedagogy is not greatly favored. This agrees with Day and Gu (2010), whose study indicated that innovation is often hindered by risk-averse school cultures and inadequate support for experimentation. Without teachers being encouraged to innovate, pedagogy becomes staid and less interactive. Researchers such as Robinson (2011) highlight the importance of creativity in education, arguing that authorization for teachers to experiment with new methods is crucial in addressing varied learning ability and style among learners.

Low teacher participation in school-level decision-making (mean = 2.197) suggests a hierarchical governance structure, limiting collaborative leadership. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) emphasize that shared decision-making fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among teachers, which positively influences student achievement. Lack of teacher voice in decision-making processes may lead to disengagement and reduce motivation, which indirectly impacts pupil performance. This supports

Sergiovanni (1992) advocacy for moral leadership that values teacher input as central to school improvement.

With an average score of 2.028 and 85.3% disagreement, teachers are excluded from making decisions regarding curriculum implementation. Such exclusion might result in a gap between curriculum objectives and classroom outcomes, just as Ball and Cohen (1996) posit that teachers are the major agents of curriculum enactment. The exclusion of teachers from curriculum planning and application dampens their professional identity and erodes their capacity to contextualize content, especially in rural or resource-poor settings such as Soroti.

The findings also indicate a weak culture of empowerment and accountability (mean = 2.021), showing structural weaknesses in institutional support. Institutional designs that balance autonomy with accountability accompany promoting a professional culture, as OECD (2005) recommends. In their absence, teachers' performance may dwindle, and instructional quality may be compromised. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) observe that professional capital is built by trust, shared responsibility, and collaborative cultures, rather than punitive accountability or central mandates.

Remarkably, even the assumed relationship between professional qualification and student performance is questioned (mean = 2.225; 56.3% disagreement), reflecting disappointment with the actual impact of teacher training. This finding reflects the grievance expressed by Darling-Hammond (2006) that not certification, but quality and contextualization of teacher training make it effective. If training does not equip teachers with useful classroom skills or align with the local school context, it will most probably not lead to improved pupil performance.

The regression results ($r = 0.080$, $p = 0.281$) and low explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.006$) statistically confirm the minimal contribution of professional empowerment to

explaining variance in pupils' performance. While empowerment is of value in and of itself for professional identity and motivation, its independent impact is not strong. The same findings were reported by Blasé and Kirby (2000), who argue that empowerment is best mixed with systemic reform—i.e., resource provision, leadership development, and student support systems—in order to produce significant academic outcomes.

Empowerment-performance critics argue that empowerment without the surmounting of structural impediments such as large class sizes, inadequate materials, and low salaries is insufficient (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Others, on the other hand, take the position that empowerment serves as a foundation upon which broader reforms must be built (Evans, 1996). In Uganda, perhaps, the problem is how to convert theoretical commitment to empowerment into concrete policy practice at the school level supported by school leadership and district education offices.

This study adds to the limited empirical research on teacher empowerment in poor contexts, in this instance, Ugandan rural schools. The study discovers a paradox: while empowerment is greatly advocated in education reform literature, its enactment is poor. The findings require rethinking teacher empowerment as a stand-alone intervention, not as part of a multi-component strategy involving teacher professional development, collaborative governance, school leadership training, and community participation. Future research must investigate how various combinations of these components influence learning outcomes and teaching effectiveness.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and areas of further research according to research objectives.

6.1 Summary of the findings

6.1.1 To what extent does teacher involvement in school governance influence pupils' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools?

The study of teacher involvement in school governance in Soroti District primary schools revealed that there was limited participation by teachers in the key areas of governance of decision-making, academic planning, policy-making, budgeting, and committee work, where general means indicated limited participation. This limited participation may undermine the utilization of the pedagogical knowledge of teachers, which is vital for the improvement of academic performance. Specifically, the findings highlighted that only 54.9% of teachers perceived themselves as being involved in decision-making and that participation in committee work and resource planning was alarmingly low. Despite such low involvement levels, regression analysis indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between teacher participation and academic achievement, which implies that while teacher participation is not the sole contributor to academic achievement, it plays a significant role. The study cites a discrepancy between policy ideals and actual participatory governance practices in education, in this case, the Ugandan context.

6.1.2 What is the impact of teacher participation in instructional decision making on the classroom learning environment in Soroti District primary schools?

Teachers' involvement in instructional decision-making, especially for transfer procedures, remains very low in most Soroti District primary schools. Though moderately aware of their transfer conditions were some teachers, the majority reported poor communication, poor consultation, no regard for personal and family welfare, and no money and logistical support. In addition, fairness and transparency perceptions in transfer processes were extremely low. Regression analysis found teacher involvement in instructional decision-making has a very weak and statistically insignificant positive impact on the learning environment within the classroom, and it is likely other variables have a greater impact upon classroom conditions and teacher morale.

6.1.3 What role does professional empowerment play in enhancing pupils' academic achievement in Soroti District primary schools?

The research found that professional teacher autonomy in the Soroti District primary schools is seen as being low because it is clear from the total mean of 2.252 and standard deviation of 0.968. The most critical areas of autonomy in lesson planning, pedagogical innovation, school-level decision-making participation, contribution to curriculum delivery, and fostering accountability culture were all ranked low. Most of the instructors indicated that they felt isolated from constructive professional contact and decision-making, resulting in low motivation. The belief that professional training enhances pupil performance was also low, perhaps because teacher training failed to tackle genuine classroom issues. Regression analysis revealed a very slight positive correlation ($r = 0.080$) between professional empowerment and academic achievement of pupils, explaining just 0.6% of the variance by the model ($R^2 = 0.006$), indicating that professional empowerment contributes very little.

6.2 Conclusions

6.2.1 To what extent does teacher involvement in school governance influence pupils' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools?

The findings of the research show that teachers' involvement in school governance has a significant and positive effect on the academic performance of pupils ($\beta = 0.173$, $p = 0.0004$). The implication is that, when teachers are engaged in governing activities such as policy formulation, management of resources, and school decision-making, pupil learning is enhanced. Teachers' engagement with governance appears to establish an enabling and responsible school environment that indirectly enhances academic performance.

6.2.2 What is the impact of teacher participation in instructional decision making on the classroom learning environment in Soroti District primary schools?

Teacher participation in instruction decision-making positively but statistically had no effect on the academic performance of students ($\beta = 0.071$, $p = 0.119$). While teachers' participation in decisions regarding teaching methods, lesson planning, and classroom order can support a favorable learning environment, the effect on measurable academic accomplishments in this study was minimal. This implies that other factors such as teaching materials, student motivation, and class size may moderate or override the influence of Teacher participation in instruction decision-making.

6.2.3 What role does professional empowerment play in enhancing pupils' academic achievement in Soroti District primary schools?

Professional empowerment positively but statistically insignificantly affected academic performance ($\beta = 0.078$, $p = 0.099$). Although trained teachers—through professional development, training, and instructional materials—are likely to adopt

improved instruction practices, this alone doesn't heavily equate to improved academic performance unless supportive school systems and learning-friendly environments are present.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 To what extent does teacher involvement in school governance influence pupils' academic performance in Soroti District primary schools?

Education authorities and school managements in Soroti District need to implement measures to promote active teacher involvement in school decision making. This can include establishing teacher councils, including teachers in school management committees, and promoting collective decision making to enhance pupil learning outcomes.

6.3.2 What is the impact of teacher participation in instructional decision making on the classroom learning environment in Soroti District primary schools?

Schools should persist in encouraging teacher participation in instructional decision-making but add professional development and resource allocation to it. Preparing teachers in pedagogical planning through working together, research-informed teaching practices, and classroom management can enhance the quality of their decision-making on learning outcomes.

6.3.3 What role does professional empowerment play in enhancing pupils' academic achievement in Soroti District primary schools?

Education stakeholders should upgrade professional empowerment activities with in-service training of a directional type, mentorship, and career growth. Concurrently, all these efforts have to be buttressed at the school level by credible systems of support so that empowered teachers are able to effectively convert their capability into improved pupil achievements.

6.4 Areas for further studies

1. The impact of teacher participation on academic performance and to ascertain best practices in school leadership that can facilitate greater teacher participation in governance.
2. Explore the joint effects of teacher involvement supplemented by other motivational and structural factors—e.g., availability of resources, leadership support, and professional development—on the classroom learning environment and student academic performance in primary schools in the Soroti District.
3. The interaction effects of professional empowerment and other determinants such as school leadership, availability of teaching and learning resources, teacher motivation, and parent participation on pupils' attainment to develop a more empirically based model of educational effectiveness in primary schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix i: Questionnaire

Dear respondent,

Request to Complete a Research Questionnaire.

I am **ILADO MARY GORETTY** REG. NO. **RJ15/BUW/MED/004** a student at Uganda Christian University, pursuing a Master's Degree in Educational Management and Planning. I am conducting a study on Teacher Involvement in Decision-Making and Academic Performance in Soroti District Primary Schools as part of the requirements for completing my program. You have been selected as a potential respondent for this study. I kindly request you to complete this questionnaire as honestly as possible. Your responses will be highly valued, kept strictly confidential, and used solely for academic purposes.

Thanks

ILADO MARY GORETTY

REG. NO. RJ15/BUW/MED/004

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Instruction: For each of the items in this section, kindly tick (✓) in the box that represents the right option and where necessary, specify accordingly.

1. **Gender:** Male Female
2. **Age Group:** 20-29 30-39 40-49 50 and above
3. **Level of Education:** Certificate Diploma Bachelor's Degree
Master's Degree PhD Other.....
4. **Years of Experience in Education Sector:**
40

Less than 5 years

5-10 years

11-15 years

16 years and above

SECTION B: Teacher involvement in school governance

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by ticking correspondingly

Key: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 2 =Strongly Disagree, 1= Undecided

CODE	Teacher involvement in school governance	5	4	3	2	1
B1	Teachers are actively engaged in making significant decisions within school.					
B2	Teachers are engaged by the school administration in planning academic programs.					
B3	Teachers are consulted during policy and rule-making within schools.					
B4	Teachers are engaged in budget planning and resource allocation.					
B5	Teachers sit on committees that oversee improvement in academic performance.					
B6	Teacher involvement in school governance improves learner outcomes.					
B7	Teacher initiatives (e.g., remedial programs) are improved when teachers are involved.					

SECTION C: Impact of teacher participation

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by ticking correspondingly

Key: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 2 =Strongly Disagree, 1= Undecided

CODE	Impact of teacher participation	5	4	3	2	1
C1	The conditions and terms of my transfer were explained to me in detail.					
C2	I was adequately informed before my transfer.					
C3	My personal and family well-being were considered while making the conditions of my transfer.					
C4	I was consulted or provided with a role in the decision before being transferred.					
C5	Financial or logistical support was provided to facilitate my transfer					
C6	The new working environment was as anticipated from pre-transfer communication.					
C7	Open and fair procedures were used in the transfer process.					

SECTION D: The role of professional empowerment

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by ticking correspondingly

Key: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 2 =Strongly Disagree, 1= Undecided

CODE	The role of professional empowerment	5	4	3	2	1
D1	Teachers are empowered to develop teaching plans in class.					
D2	Teachers are encouraged to be innovative in the delivery of lessons.					
D3	Teachers are actively involved in decision-making at school level.					
D4	Opinions from teachers are solicited in matters of curriculum implementation.					
D5	The school promotes teacher empowerment and accountability culture.					
D6	Trained professional teachers improve pupil performance.					

Appendix ii: Interview Guide

For Parents and SMC Members

1. In what ways do you think teacher involvement in school governance impacts pupils' academic performance in this school?
2. What challenges have you observed when teachers participate in decision-making at the school governance level?
3. How do you think administrative support influences the effectiveness of teacher participation in governance?
4. Based on your observations, how does teacher participation in decision-making affect pupils' discipline and engagement in class?
5. Do you think teachers who are actively involved in school governance also contribute more effectively to classroom learning? Why or why not?
6. What role do you believe the School Management Committee should play in supporting teacher involvement in decision-making?
7. In your opinion, how does providing teachers with more professional autonomy and development opportunities impact pupils' learning outcomes?
8. What challenges do you think teachers face in balancing governance responsibilities and their teaching roles?
9. How can the school leadership and SMC better support teachers in their governance roles while ensuring their workload remains manageable?