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OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

The Influence of Local Government Politics on the Performance of Teachers and School Administrators in Uganda: A Case Study of Bundibugyo District

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DECLARATION A

I do hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has never been presented for a degree or any other academic award in any university or institution of learning in Uganda and beyond.

KIMULYA ADORABLE

Date

DECLARATION B

I confirm that this dissertation is the student's original work done under my supervision and guidance.

Name of supervisor: Dr Salvatore Fava

Date

APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation entitled “**The influence of local government politics on the performance of school teachers and administrators in Uganda: A case study of Bundibugyo district local government**” prepared and submitted by **Kimulya Adorable** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of **Doctor of Philosophy in Education Management and Administration** has been examined and approved by the panel on oral examination with a grade of: _____

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DEDICATION

I hereby dedicate this work to my wife Mrs. Biira Keziah and to my children, Musoki Dawn, Muhindo Darwin, Bwambale Dwight, Masereka Adorable, Kule Duffield and Biira Desire for their fortitude and support while I pursued this course. Furthermore, I dedicate this work to my parents: Rtd. Pr. Yusufu Sibanza and mom Hannah Sibanza for laying the foundation onto which I build.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my brothers and sisters: Enid, Joshua, Mirika, Pamenas and Nahson; and my work friend, Eria Sukutha whose courage from the start to the end I cannot underestimate. May this work inspire you, your children and grandchildren to pursue education to greater horizons and to the final academic level.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

CVI	Content Validity index
D V	Dependent Variables
DES	Directorate of Educational Standards
I V	Independent Variables
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NEA	National Education Association
SMC	School management Committee
PTA	Parents and Teachers Association

Abstract

This study focused on the correlation between local government politics and performance of school administrators. Politics is a set of activities linked to decision making in groups or other forms of power relations among individuals, such as the distribution of resources or status. Local politics involves decision making within the boundaries of the local unit of government, such as a district. In Uganda, the local government Act (1997) mandates the district chairperson to be the supreme political head of the district in matters concerning district administration. This makes the district run in accordance to one's management skills. In Bundibugyo, the aftermath of the district chairperson's elections of 2021 saw many heads of institutions and their teachers transferred: some to very poor and remote schools, especially those who did not give in their support to the elect during his election campaigns; and others to good, urban and semi-urban schools as a reward for their support during the political campaigns that shepherded the chairperson into office. Many school administrators nearly quitted work for other activities. Using interviews and focus groups, this study will therefore help local government politicians and school administrators to draw a strong line between local government politics and public service in Uganda.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Introduction

Education can be defined as the transmission of knowledge, values and skills from one person, the teacher, to another person, the learner. It can take place consciously (voluntarily) or unconsciously (involuntarily). According to Aliyu (2001), education as a method by which a society transmits its knowledge, culture and values from one generation to the next. The transmission of cultural values and skills (Education) started at home and came to be known as informal education. In this, parents taught their children how to do home-based activities including important responsibilities and roles children play in a home.

Fafunwa (2004) defined education as the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitude and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which he lives. According to Hosper (1972), the degree to which one gets to understand a particular concept, the richer or better one becomes. This implies that we keep getting new knowledge, gain new skills, attitudes and values from around us. This study regarding the Influence of Local Politics on the Performance of school administrators in Uganda was carried out among 34 government schools of Bundibugyo District in the aftermath of the 2021 local government elections of district leaders and area members of parliament. This chapter has the following sections, Background of the study, Statement of the problem, Purpose of the study, Objectives of the study, Research questions, Scope of the study, Justification of the study, Significance of the study. The second chapter is a review of related literature, findings from other researchers regarding the influence or impact of local politics on the management and administration of education institutions has manifested itself in these institutions. In the chapter three, the methodology used has been shown where the Study design, Area of study, Information sources, Population and sampling techniques, Variable and indicators, Procedure for data collection, Questionnaire, Interviews, focus group discussions, Data collection instruments, Quality/ Error control, Strategy for data processing and analysis have been explained.

1.2. Background of the Study

Most educators define politics as the activities associated with the governance of a country or area, especially the debate between parties having power. United Nation Development

Programme (UNDP 2011) defined politics as a struggle over value, power and scarce resources in which the aim of the conflicting interest is to gain the desired value and resources at the expense of other rivals. Politics is a social science and its study through organised movements can create sound administration. The challenge, however, is with getting involved directly in the activities associated with the governance of a country or area. This is worse in African states where leadership of a country fails to follow the rule of law and is coupled with blood shed as a way to eliminate those whose ideologies seem to battle with those of them in power. In Uganda and many countries of Africa as a whole, Political leaders are the primary holders, controllers and distributors of power and resources in their countries or states. Contemporary African leaders operate in an environment constrained by colonial legacies and instability. Leadership is characteristically neo-patrimonial, featuring presidentialism, clientelism, the use of state resources and the centralisation of power.

Van Wyke, J-A., 2007, puts it clear that Autocratic and personalised political power, legitimised by the legacy of liberation struggles, have frequently produced cases of ‘stayism’ whereby leaders employ extra-constitutional and coercive means to retain power. Although a wave of post-Cold War democratisations has reduced cases of ‘*stayism*’, this process has yet to be consolidated. Weak opposition parties, a focus on loyalty rather than issues, constrained civil society and media, privatised violence, politicised armies and intra-state violence all remain issues of concern. Local leader who get to power through the support of such autocratic leaders tend to behave likewise. They believe the system understands them and so they can take the law in their hands.

Even those elected in what is called a democratic system oftentimes come to power through vote rigging, bribery of voters, intimidation, harassment and imprisonment of opponents and / or their supporters. Struggles of this kind end up into unspeakable retaliations.

Civil servants and non-political institutions, such as schools, churches and religious bodies, the national army and police ought to distance themselves from political activism and all related activities and practices. This is because politicians are often dirty, greedy and ready to fulfil their ambitions by any means possible. When one aspires to join a political post, he or she is advised to resign from public service because civil servants’ involvement in active politics is illegal.

Whereas Smith, Steven Michael (2017), put it, that “The role of politicians is integral within the public-school system.” He did not mean that school administrators and or teachers need to be involved in active politics in order to do their work well but that the planning system and governance of the country plays an essential role in the development of the school. Civil servants are expected to work impartially regardless of the political party in power. New party forming the government will trust the bureaucracy with non-partisanship, thus, fostering mutual trust enabling both to work together for the public interest.

In many districts of Uganda, teachers have been playing a key role in the local and national governance of the country. This is done in many ways. It is done through community outreaches and sensitizations using the students’ parents or by resigning from civil service and directly get involved in government politics. Some sit on local council executives and are trusted because of their professional ethics while others act as state senators or legislators.

According to Ogbonnaya (2006), Politics may influence policies on funding, staff-personnel administration, provision of basic infrastructure, equipment and school-community relation. In Bundibugyo, this was found very true after the local government elections that left most of the school administrators who did not support the candidature of some politicians transferred to hard-to-reach schools to give way to their supporters. Staff welfare was negatively affected. The challenge did not end with transfers, instead another directive was issued in which teachers were asked to teach in or around their home villages. In a multi-ethnic society, this clearly indicated that teachers were to teach students of their own ethnic origin save those who were serving in towns that were cosmopolitan.

Mackatiani, Caleb; Imbovah, Mercy; et al; Journal of Education and Practice, v7 n11 p55-60 2016, stated clearly that political factors dictate the type of education system a particular country can have. Politics determines the general administration atmosphere including that of educational institutions and educational policy formulation, adoption and implementation. This is very true because for Bundibugyo, the policy to have teachers teach in their places of origin was developed locally but politically influenced to allow the two main warring tribes of the Bakonzo and Bamba remain unmixed up, which created a sense of independence between the tribes. It should be noted that such divisionism or separatism can never be a solution to tribal conflicts because human beings or tribes cannot live in isolation of others. Politics should be a vehicle through which better educational reforms and policies are implemented instead of enhancing divisionism.

Students performance in public schools has also been an issue that has continually been a thorn in the flesh of school administrators. In order to guarantee success, teachers are encouraged to teach students topics and skills that are expected to appear in their end of course examinations. This is because poor performance has also been a cause for transfers. And these transfers are motivated by politicians who assume authority over all other workers in the country. They also threaten to transfer Chief Administrative officers who are in charge of all workers in the district if they do not pay heed to their demands. This is common where Local politicians campaign to reform schools by increasing test scores of the learners.

The role played by teachers in the development of a nation has been neglected by many politicians. Teachers and school administrators are not been considered as public administrators whose views can be listened to. They teach politicians who later turn against them, belittle them and even mistreat them in their service.

Wilson (1887), outlined what later became the politics-administration dichotomy, a theoretical model that emphasizes distinct features and roles of public administration vis-à-vis politics. He says that public administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics. This is true with the constitution of the republic of Uganda where, public servants are supposed to be non-partisan. On the contrary, in Uganda, politicians, right from the president to the local council leaders tend to drag all citizens into politics during political campaigns irrespective of the roles they play in society. Public servants get attached to different politicians and their parties contrary to the laws of the land. Those who do not show support to the ruling party, though they remain indifferent and loyal to the laws of the land, are branded as ‘opposition’ and end up in the same ‘pit’ with those who oppose the ruling party.

On the contrary, this does not mean that school administrators and political leaders should work in isolation. The two categories are supposed to work together to advance the national and achieve national goals together. If this was done, there wouldn’t be any cause for alarm but the problem comes with the assumption of all powers by politicians including that which should be left to technicians. All to achieve personal interest.

Svara (1987), proposes that there should be a clear structural division of authority between elected and administrative officials to eliminate or minimize undue political influences on public administration as well as potential conflicts. This is very true because of the fact that the two are very different in their functionality, roles and responsibilities. Most elected

officers have had very low academic achievements but thrive on their ability to persuade the masses to accept them. On the other hand, administrative officers or civil servants are employed on academic merit (knowledge and skills). As politicians become aware that their elevation comes as an unmerited favour not as a result of their training, knowledge and skills, they tend to use their authority to be felt in society and to remain relevant in the communities they lead. This is where things go wrong. They collide in their roles and responsibilities and eventually ruin the system.

1.3.Statement of the Problem

The influence of politics on the performance of school teachers and administrators begins right from the time of appointment into the teaching service through their elevation and installation into office as school administrators, commonly known as Headteachers in Uganda's context. Political influence in education in Uganda is mirrored both in the setting of educational institution of learning as well as the appointment of teachers and administrators in schools. The high level of unemployment in Uganda has left many qualified teachers jobless. The moment an opening to recruit more teachers is announced, the competition for these fewer places than the aspiring candidates becomes very tight creating room for bribes, connections and influences from political and religious leaders and other high-ranking servants to ensure that one secures a place. The same happens when it comes to promotions to headship. The head of the district in Uganda's decentralized system of administration takes overall authority and power over all workers and many times interferes with the work for the district public service committee that is charged with recruitment and promotion of civil servants.

It is upon the above challenging factor that the researcher investigated the influence of local government politics on the performance of teachers and administrators in Uganda, where attention was put on Bundibugyo district local government.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which local government politics impact the performance of teachers and administrators in Bundibugyo district of western Uganda.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the effect of politics on the performance of school administrators in Bundibugyo district.
2. To discuss the cause for involuntary or forced transfers of teachers and school administrator in Bundibugyo district.
3. To examine the extent to which involuntary transfers affect the performance of teachers and school administrators in Bundibugyo district.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be of value to Ministry of Education and Sports officials, who may use the information from the study to design worthwhile teacher transfer policies, sensitization of teachers and administrators on their professional rights and rightly manage administrative concerns related to teachers' grievances, transfers and promotions and educate the teachers on how to set a clear boundary between their work and local government politics.

The research findings may be used to inform government leaders and aspiring ones to rightly provide a clear demarcation between their roles as politicians and the roles of public officers in the civil service sector. Researchers in education and other related fields may use the findings of the study to enrich their own study as a source of literature.

1.7. Justification of the Study

The performance of teachers and school administrators is very key to improved learning outcomes of the learners in Uganda and world over. When teachers and school administrators do their work effectively and efficiently, the learning outcomes are expected to improve greatly. Teachers and school administrators' performance has greatly been affected by their involvement in or establishing ties with local government politics. When teachers and school administrators' performance is poor, chances of poor performance on the students' side are very high. Teachers' performance is said to be greatly influenced among other factors by unplanned and forced transfers. These are mostly the transfers to

place very far from the teacher's family, hard-to-reach and remote places. If the teacher is interested in the transfer, chances are that he / she will perform better after the transfer, and the reverse is true. The need to carry out the study was rooted in the fact that such studies have not been conducted in Bundibugyo district of western Uganda. Related studies, elsewhere in Uganda focussed on teacher transfers and performance but did not look at what brought about forced, massive transfers. This is what made the study very significant.

1.8. Research Questions

1. How does politics impact the teaching service in Bundibugyo district and Uganda as a whole?
2. How do politicians influence the performance of teachers and school administrators in Bundibugyo?
3. What are the effects of forced / involuntary transfers of teachers in Bundibugyo district?

1.9. Scope of the Study

The study was looked at under content scope, time scope and geographical scope. This is done to provide a good order and understanding of the procedure employed by the researcher and the problem under study.

1.9.1. Content Scope

The study was restricted to the influence of politics on the performance of teachers and school administrators in Bundibugyo district. It also looked at how teacher transfers affected their performance in schools.

1.9.2. Geographical scope

The study covered all the 13 sub-counties of Bundibugyo district where 34 out of 107 (31.7%) government aided primary schools were under study.

1.9.3. Time Scope

The study covered a period fourteen (14) years from 2009 up to 2022. This period was long enough and when analysed, it provided the researcher with a clear picture of the influence

politics has had on the performance of teachers and school administrators in Bundibugyo district of western Uganda.

1.9.4. Hypotheses of the Study

The study was testing the following suppositions;

1. Local Government Politics has a significant effect on performance of teachers and school administrators in Schools in Bundibugyo district.
2. Forced teacher transfers have a significant negative effect on performance of teachers and school administrators in Bundibugyo district.

1.10. Theoretical Framework

1.10.1. Introduction

In every country globally, politics plays a critical part in influencing and shaping educational policies, teacher recruitment, working conditions as well as funding educational activities and the education system as a whole. This study that looks at the influence that politics has on the performance of teachers as well as school administrators delves into the impact of political decisions and policies on teachers' performance worldwide. The same study includes school administrators because they are teachers first, and later administrators, although the reverse, in some rare cases, happens. For these influences to be grasped, the investigation is grounded in the Critical Theory, Public Choice Theory and the Expectancy Theory as well.

1.10.2. Critical Theory

In this theory, the proponents, such as Marx, Hegel, Kant, Foucault, Derrida, and Kristeva, examine power dynamics in society and how political structures influence education. Critical theorists cling to the notion that there is no unitary truth that can be known by using one way or method. These philosophers or proponents of the critical theory believe in diverse schools of thought for one to take a decision on how to do something. This is why we find different viewpoints, including those of politicians interfering with the viewpoints of the professional teachers as well as educators. The theory helps explain how government policies, political ideologies, and bureaucratic control affect teachers' autonomy, job satisfaction, and

performance. According to Habermas (1984), true social consensus can be attained through open, rational communication, free from distortion by power imbalances, unlike the manipulative system forces of money and power that often dominate society. In his 'Theory of Communicative Action, Habermas believes that individuals reach mutual understanding through open and reasoned communication, aiming for consensus based on shared norms and values. This is what opens the door for politicians to get involved in matters beyond their jurisdiction.

1.10.3. Public Choice Theory

Public choice theory is one that uses economic tools to study political behavior as well as public policy. It is based on the perception that people act in their own self-interest in politics or the politicians, bureaucrats as well as the population as a whole. In this way, local governments are believed to perform best when market shares are spread out, rather than concentrating in a few large units. Based on this theory, all parties involved in government leadership are motivated by self-interest. The politicians, in this regard take the lead. Most of what they do is directed towards remaining relevant among the populations they serve but also their survival in the realm of politics. In this, political decisions remain driven by self-interest, influencing public services, government policies on teacher salaries, working conditions and resource allocation affect. All these affect teacher motivation and performance.

1.10.4. Expectancy Theory

According to Vroom (1964), an individual's behavior is motivated by anticipated results or consequences, and the intensity of their work is driven by the perception that their effort will lead to the desired outcomes. This expectancy theory is a psychological theory which states that individuals perform depending on expected rewards and incentives. In the theory of motivation, this implies that teacher performance is very much dependent on what they expect to gain in turn of their efforts and services. The theory also helps explain how political decisions regarding teacher promotions, job security and career development influence their motivation and effectiveness. To sum it up, by interacting with the Critical Theory, Public Choice Theory and the Expectancy Theory, this theoretical framework provides a basis for or is the foundation for taking a critical look at the politics influences the performance of teachers as well as school administrators globally.

1.11. Conceptual Framework

In this part, the paper presents more formal theories as well as other concepts and empirical findings from the literature and from the data collected during the investigations made in the field. Here, the relationships among these ideas and how they relate to the study has been made explicit as shown hereafter.

Figure 1. 1: Conceptual framework showing relationship between Teachers and Administrators versus Overall Performance.

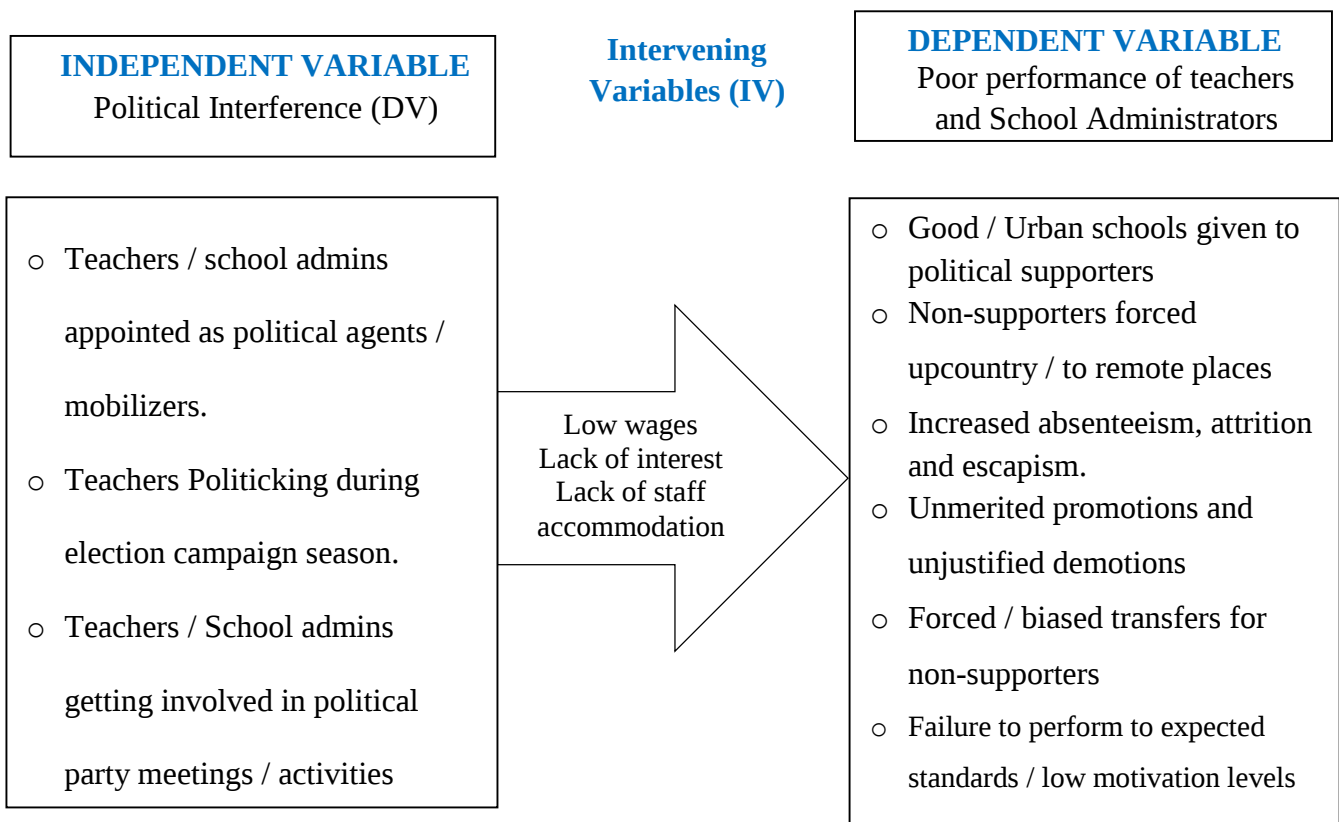


Figure 1. 1: **Source:** Primary Data (Adorable 2023)

The conceptual framework above shows how political interferences (IV) affected performance (DV) of both teachers and school administrators in Bundibugyo district of western Uganda. When teachers and school administrators show their political sides during or even after the process of electing local government leaders, their success depends on the win. The moment politicians they do not support go through an election, they face challenges at work including transfers to hard-to-reach and / or hard-to-live places,

interdictions for trivial issues, loss of support from the political side or ruling party and as a result, the teachers and the administrators lose morale for work leading to poor performance of the teachers, school administrators and eventually poor learning outcomes. Forced transfers stress teachers and administrators so much that they do not only impact their performance but also their relationships with the learners. This leads to the administration of corporal punishments and abuse of learners' rights.

1.12. Operational Definitions of Terms and Concepts

The following are some of the key concepts and their definitions as used in this study and beyond.

1.12.1. Political Interferences

In this paper, political interference refers to a situation when a politician is actively affecting decisions taken by individuals or organizations or the civil service functionality. According to the laws of the republic of Uganda, Education (Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act 2008, educational institutions, especially the school system, ought to be as far away from politics as possible. This is due to the fact that policymakers are often assumed to be dirty, greedy and can do anything to fulfil their ambitions by any probable means.

1.12.2. Forced / Involuntary Teacher transfers

In this study, forced transfers refers to the abrupt, unplanned re-allocation of new work stations to teachers and school administrators. Forced transfers are never voluntary or consented upon but involuntary and insincere. Kate E. Riordan 2013, shows that involuntary teacher transfer occurs whenever the reassignment of a teacher is initiated by a school or district rather than the teacher. He adds that it is more common among special education teachers than among general education teachers. Although this type of transfer is not a new phenomenon, there has been surprisingly little scientific inquiry into this practice to determine its effect on teachers and students. This paper tries to show some of these effects on teachers, school administrators and how the whole impacts student achievement.

1.12.3. Teacher performance

Refers to the competence of an individual teacher in terms of knowledge, skills, ability to assess and evaluate learning, exhibit professionalism, positive attitude and value for his / her work. This is in line with the Uganda national teacher competence framework (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2022 / <https://www.education.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Competence-Profile-for-the-Primary-School-Teacher-in-Uganda.pdf>). Teacher performance can also be the observable outcomes of the teaching learning process in the classroom. It can also be a set of actions, attitudes, and behaviours in the teaching-learning environment that results in achieving educational goals for students.

1.12.4. Local Government

Many sites define Local government as a broad term for the lowest tiers of public administration within a particular sovereign state. In Uganda where decentralization is adopted as a form of governance, the operations of Local government are provided for by the Local Governments Act 1997, enshrined in Chapter XI of the constitution of the republic of Uganda. It comprises of district councils sitting at the apex of a five-tier structure. The other four tiers comprise of (1) county and municipal councils; (2) sub-county and town councils; (3) parish councils; and (4) village and ward councils. In this paper, the local government tier responsible for teacher transfers in primary education is the district or municipal councils.

1.12.5. Local Government Politics

Refers to all activities associated with the governance of a local area (District, county, province or village) in making decisions in groups, or other forms of power relations among individuals, such as the distribution of resources or status. In this paper, local government politics that has had an impact on the performance of teachers is mainly within the district or municipal and sub-county or division structures that are charged with the welfare of schools and the human resource therein.

1.12.6. School Administrators

School administrators are appointed officers in schools responsible for providing organizational support for an office or department within those schools. They play a crucial role in the day-to-day life of a school by providing a wide range of managerial support to keep everything running as smoothly as possible. School administrators in Uganda are referred to as *head-teachers*.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0. Introduction

Local government politics play a significant role in shaping educational systems, affecting policies, funding, teacher performance, and school administration worldwide. This chapter reviews existing literature on the impact of local political dynamics on teachers and school administrators. It explores key themes such as policy influence, resource allocation, political interference, and administrative autonomy. The researcher reviews the literature related to the influence of local politics on teachers' and administrators' performance. An overview of political interference as a major cause forced transfers in western Uganda, Bundibugyo district in particular is also discussed. In addition, promotion, demotion and other staffing challenges are also discussed. There is a discussion of the various effects of forced teacher transfers on the school as an organization and on the teacher or school administrator as an individual. Finally, the impact of teacher transfers on students is also hinted upon. The chapter specifically presents the theoretical, conceptual review and the actual literature based on the study objectives. These include; political influences on teacher and school administrator performance; forced transfers and teacher / school administrator performance and summary of literature review.

2.1. Theoretical Review

Every nation's desire is to have a team of a committed work force in order to boost production of quality goods and services for her people. In the education sector, this desire is even greater as education shapes the country playing an important role in National development. (Armstrong, 2012). The Jomtiem World Education Conference (1990) and the Dakar- Senegal Declaration (2000) have come to be known as game changers. In these international conferences, education was given top priority on the development agenda and they pledged to mobilize all governments, civil society organizations that have education as one of their thematic areas, education professionals and, to some extent, the private sector.

According to Armstrong (2013) Valency Vroom (1964) developed the Expectancy Theory through his study of the motivation behind decision-making. Vroom sheds light on how people behave in the workplace, particularly when it comes to motivation, leadership and decision-making. High or outstanding Performance is very much dependent on

motivation. Staff wellbeing plays a key role in the motivation of workers. Teachers and administrators behave or act in a way that reflect their level of satisfaction. When teachers are satisfied with the work they do, their performance becomes high and their learners are attended to very well. This improves learning outcomes which makes known all over. School administrators of good performing teachers become proud of them and do not wish to lose them to other schools by transfer or other reasons. Sometimes, school administrators struggle a lot sourcing for competent teachers. They also keep updating the teaching staff they have with new knowledge through refresher courses, coaching and onsite mentoring. This makes school administrators to keep them in order to maintain excellent performance. When the administrator takes good care of the teacher, it makes the teacher feel at home – not willing to heed to any suggestion for transfer. Transfers of teachers or migrations are some of the causes of teacher turnover. It becomes worse when such transfers are not planned or imposed onto them.

Luekens et al., (2004), clearly shows that between 1999 and 2001, 7.4% of all public-school teachers deserted the teaching profession and 7.7% moved to different work stations / schools making a total of 15.1% attrition and migration rate globally. Some end up leaving the teaching profession to other jobs or business. Still, Komakech, 2017 and Luekens et al., 2004 clearly shows that Teacher transfers have become a significant problem affecting the teaching profession, school performance and learner achievements.

Hossain et al. (2017) and Hossain (2019) have both stated that education systems and learning outcomes world-wide are shaped by a range of technical and political complexities. Politics play a very big role in shaping the education system of a country. The political situation or the country's political aspirations can help redeem the country's education system or break it down. Grindle (2004); Hanushek and Woessmann (2007) have shown that the challenges of improving quality also face political complexities. Even at a time promising intervention are identified, leaders do not quickly see results to be able to invest in quality education alongside their voters' other interests (Kosack (2012). This study therefore attempted to bring to light the influence of local government politics has on the performance of teachers and school administrators in primary schools in western Uganda.

2.2.The Role of Local Government in Education

In Uganda, Local governments are charged with the responsibility of implementing national education guidelines and policies which includes guidance on managing school budgets, hiring educators / teachers, and upholding minimum basic requirements for school operation in a bid to promote quality education. According to Jade Yeban et al, 2024, “Local governments in the communities closest to the students provide local control. They provide school programs to meet the needs of students in their communities.” Schools perform their activities following government directives that relate to their operations. Local governments, in collaboration with the central government provide schools with the yearly program which must be followed. They examine students especially at the end of the primary school circle following the national or central examinations program. School officials, head-teachers and teachers work under the oversight of educational agencies. The local governments supervise, monitor government programmes and ensure that schools are working towards the improvement of learning outcomes. They must execute these initiatives and be accountable for the outcomes.

2.3. Influence of Local Government Politics and Teacher Performance

A literature review on the negative impact of political involvement of teachers explores the complex relationship between educators’ political engagement and their professional roles. While teachers’ involvement in political activities is often viewed as a way to exercise their rights and advocate for important educational reforms, there are concerns about the potential negative impacts on teaching quality, classroom dynamics, and public perception of education.

There are very few countries that have been known for their political-free educational programs. Countries like Finland and Canada, schools operate with minimal political influence from the local governments. This has been known as the reason for high teacher autonomy and better educational outcomes (Sahlberg, 2011). Conversely, in developing nations like Uganda, local politics often dictate teacher appointments and school administration, sometimes undermining merit-based recruitment (Mukherjee, 2018).

Local government politics directly impact teachers through policies on employment, salaries, promotions, and working conditions. Political Appointments and Teacher Quality have been greatly compromised. Studies carried out by Brown & Smith (2019) found out that in politically unstable regions, teacher recruitment is often influenced by political patronage rather than qualifications. This results in hiring underqualified teachers, negatively affecting student performance. The problem doesn't end with teacher recruitment alone; it also spreads to the recruitment of all officers in the education department. During the recruitment of the district Inspector of schools in Kasese district, one and the best candidate who went through the interviews was never given the job because on top of passing, the public service secretary working for the board and the local government head demanded for a bribe. The talk between the candidate and the officer revealed that the bribe was demanded by the local government heads who, also were politicians leading the district.

One of the primary concerns about political involvement is that it can compromise teachers' ability to remain objective in the classroom. Research by McLuhan (2007) suggests that when teachers openly express political opinions, they may unintentionally influence students' views, creating an environment where students feel pressured to adopt particular political stances. The teacher's role as a neutral facilitator of critical thinking may be undermined, leading to potential bias in the content presented and the way it is taught.

In Nigeria, Political interference in teacher recruitment has been linked to poor education outcomes. Many teachers are hired based on political connections rather than qualifications, leading to declining education standards (Okonkwo, 2019). This is not different from what is happening in Uganda, and in Bundibugyo in particular.

According to the National Education Association (NEA), teachers should strive to maintain a neutral stance to foster diverse viewpoints in the classroom. When teachers advocate strongly for political causes, it may suppress open dialogue and critical debate, which is essential for a healthy learning environment.

Teachers' political activism can also alienate students and parents who hold differing political views. Studies by Sokal (2002) and Wolter et al. (2016) have shown that when educators engage in visible political activism, it may create divisions among students and their families, especially in politically charged environments. For instance, parents may

feel that the education system is being politicized, leading to dissatisfaction with the school and the teacher's methods.

The potential for alienation is particularly significant in communities where political polarization is high. A teacher's overt political involvement may contribute to perceptions of bias, making it more difficult to foster a neutral and inclusive classroom where all students feel respected and heard.

Teachers' political involvement can affect their relationships with students, potentially altering classroom dynamics. Studies indicate that when teachers are openly political, students may feel less comfortable expressing their opinions if they disagree with the teacher's views (Levinson, 2007). This can lead to a stifled learning environment, where students avoid open discussion for fear of reprisal or judgment. The power dynamics in the classroom shift from being an educator-student relationship to one where the teacher's political views dominate, reducing the space for independent thought and critical inquiry. Additionally, some research suggests that students may become disengaged or disinterested in the subject matter if it is tied too closely to the teacher's political ideology. This can lead to a decline in motivation and academic performance, particularly if students perceive the curriculum as biased or politically charged (Zemelman et al., 2005).

Teachers are bound by professional codes of conduct that emphasize fairness, neutrality, and respect for all students. Political involvement can challenge these ethical standards, especially when it comes to maintaining a neutral and supportive learning environment. According to a report by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), political involvement can blur the lines between personal beliefs and professional responsibilities, potentially leading to ethical dilemmas. Teachers who use their classroom as a platform for political activism may undermine public trust in the education system.

Moreover, political activities, such as attending rallies, supporting particular candidates, or engaging in activism, could place teachers in a position where their professional conduct is questioned by administrators, school boards, or the community. This raises concerns about the potential for conflicts of interest or perceived bias in educational practices.

Teachers' political involvement may also have broader consequences for educational policy and the public perception of the teaching profession. When teachers are vocal in

their political activities, they may be seen as an extension of political ideologies rather than as neutral professionals dedicated to education. This can diminish public trust in the education system, particularly among conservative or politically opposed groups.

A study by McCluskey (2010) found that when educators align too closely with political movements, it may contribute to the politicization of education, where the curriculum is seen as biased or influenced by political agendas. This can lead to increased scrutiny of educational practices and policies, particularly if stakeholders believe that teaching is being shaped by external political influences rather than by educational goals.

Political involvement can also place additional stress on teachers. Engaging in political activism, especially in volatile or polarized environments, can be emotionally taxing. Teachers who are politically active may find themselves caught in contentious debates with colleagues, parents, and students, leading to increased stress and potential burnout (DeAngelis, 2016). The emotional toll of navigating these conflicts can detract from teachers' energy and focus, ultimately affecting their ability to perform their teaching duties effectively.

Teachers involved in politics may also face challenges in maintaining professional development if their activism takes precedence over their academic growth. There is a concern that time and energy spent on political activities could detract from the time needed to improve teaching practices, attend professional development programs, or engage in reflective practices. Teachers who focus heavily on political causes may miss opportunities to enhance their pedagogical skills and stay updated on the latest educational research and techniques. Political activities and pressures can limit teachers' ability to perform his or her duties effectively. During the campaign season, some opt to attending speeches of their favorites leading to absenteeism from work.

The effects of politics on Uganda's education is an inescapable phenomenon as politicians plunder into every government department in search for survival, recognition and sometimes to fail other political opponents. Like other countries in Africa and beyond, politics in Uganda occupies a central place in the daily affairs of the country. The politicians pursue control over and manipulation of policy, either overtly or covertly

because education appears to be an implicit tool in the trick of the political class (Freire, 1972). All policy decisions are made through political processes. No wonder, politics as defined earlier, 'is the process used by any society to determine how power, wealth, opportunity, status and other social goods are distributed to members of that society' (Young, Levin & Wallin, 2007).

Connelly et al (2008) suggests that 'politics govern almost every aspect of education in relation to what schooling is provided, how, to whom, in what form, by whom and with what resources... although not every educational issue is to be the subject of intense public discussion and political lobbying.'

Fiske (1996) argues that during recruitment of workers in the district, there are usually internal discussions, conflicts and political resistances regarding who gets hired or promoted. In Bundibugyo district where tribal conflicts of the two major tribes of the Bakonzo and Bamba have dipped their claws in the local politics as well as district leadership, getting ascending to a school leadership role is determined not by one's qualifications but by one's political inclinations and tribe.

Willy Kasuga (2019), states that politics defines the goals of education in a country, determines the content to be taught, the learning experiences and evaluation strategies in education. He adds that while the work of curriculum implementation in the education system is shouldered by the teacher in the classroom, preparing teaching materials, the content to teach, developing test items, assignments, projects, experiments; providing classroom instructions; monitoring, recording and reporting on the students growth and achievement; ensuring a conducive classroom environment, adapting instruction to students' intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual needs; and so on, s/he remains without say in matters regarding educational policies which are usually put in place by the politicians.

Marsh & Willis (1995), states that politics plays a major role regarding what to be taught, how it should be taught, how students should be assessed as well as financing the department which includes the remuneration of teachers and school administrators. Major decisions are made by the central government through different organs but all influenced by the political atmosphere of the country.

Kiwia (2000) argued that, there is a tendency for educational initiatives to carry multitudes on the political objectives rather than educational ones. In this, he insists on the fact that political objectives dominate all other objectives, including those related to who should run the department of education, who should be recruited to teach or to lead a school. This is worsened by the decentralization system of governance especially in fragile districts where sectarianism and tribe, as is the case with Bundibugyo district defines who qualifies for which position.

Kent and Mushi (1995, p. 42) regarding the political nature of education for self-reliance (ESR) in Tanzania which was advanced by the Tanzania National Union party of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, states that, ‘The policy of ESR could therefore be perceived as a political yet pragmatic response to defuse the emerging conflict between the ideology of the state anxious to stem urban migration and the expectations and aspirations of Tanzanian families who perceived that educational progression was the vehicle through which their children gained passage from rural, low paid agricultural employment to urban, relatively well paid employment in a parastatal organization.’ In national political processes, voice is mirrored through the positioning and authority of who gives orders. In addressing the authority and positionality of voice, the question of power is also critical in relation to who exercises power and through which voice.” (Chisholm, 2003).

Politics has also been seen in the decision of the language of instruction to be used in different levels of education. In Rwanda, Kinyarwanda was adopted as a medium of instruction based on the countries long period of political turmoil that resulted into the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi minorities. In Tanzania, Kiswahili which was popularly used during the struggle for independence by Mwalimu Nyerere and his political party is used as a medium of instruction at primary education and certificate of teacher education then, English as a medium of instruction for secondary education, diploma in teacher education and other higher education (MoES, 1995). In Uganda where English was adopted as a language of instruction almost at all levels, modifications were made to allow the use of the area language as a medium of instruction for lower primary. In districts like Bundibugyo and other towns in Uganda where it is not easy to determine the area language, politics has played a big role in dictating which language should be used for instruction irrespective of which language the teachers use. Whereas English and Kiswahili are also taught as independent subjects at primary and secondary levels in Uganda and the rest of

East Africa, the debate among academics and the public in the region continues in regard to which language (Kiswahili or English) should be used as a medium of instruction throughout all levels of education (Vuzo, 2010). All these unresolved political issues have had an underlying effect on the performance of both the teachers and the learners.

Bategeka and Okurut (2004) have clearly shown several factors that have led to failures in achieving educational goals. The factors, according to them, include political interferences in matters of education management, improper handling of teacher transfers and placement of teachers in various schools even with clear national policies in place. Olayisade Rhema Olayinka (2018) states that Planning, administration and management of educational sector are influenced by the political party in power. This is very true as the people in power assume all authority in a sense that they tend to override policies. In military governments like Uganda, it becomes worse as politicians have mastered the game of silencing those who tend to criticise their work or oppose them. Whereas the constitution of the republic of Uganda indicates precisely the distinction in terms of roles and responsibilities of politicians and public administrators (Chapter 10 of 1995 Constitution of Uganda), politicians have continually dragged civil servants including teachers and school administrators in their political games. Lodge, et. al., (1995) also states that there the growing interference of the politics into the public administration.

Bendor, et. al. (2003) also states that when an administrative institution is politicised chances for corruption become very high and the appointments to key posts are made not on the basis of merit but extraneous considerations.

According to Weber (1980), the division of labour between politicians and bureaucrats works best only when a clear distinction between the two sets of actors is made clear. Weber sees administrators, not only in the school system but in general terms, as instruments and subordinates to politicians. Yet these are the technical experts who should advise politicians and help implement their decisions. Unfortunately, administrators are never consulted by politicians as they feel greater than anyone else around them.

In Uganda, a person who holds a public office or a worker in the civil service shall not get involved in any matter of politics. He / she shall relinquish his or her position in that office if he / she seeks to join active politics, (Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995).

Moe and Wiborg (2017) states clearly that education systems and indeed, the schools are what they are far and wide because politics makes them that way. This implies that the success or failure of the education system of a country is closely linked to that country's political system. Unfortunately, political science as well as political leaders, especially in Africa have contributed sparingly to the education system of their countries, (Gift and Wibbels 2014; Busemeyer and Trampusch 2011; Ansell 2010). National budgets clearly speak into this issue when it comes to the resource envelop and allocation of funds to the different ministries including the ministry of education and sports. This has had far reaching effects on the system as low funding means poor remuneration of teachers and compromised teacher wellbeing. Unfortunately, there no incentives teachers receive for their good work.

Kemmerer (1990, 1993) indicates that low salaries can sometimes be offset by non-monetary incentives. Unfortunately, the politicians in Uganda are the ones who set these standards in parliament and many times, they have looked at increasing their salaries, allowances and other benefits but have, in a way, forgotten their teachers. A high school leaver elected to a sit of Member of Parliament earns 70 times higher than a graduate teacher in Uganda's primary schools and about 69 times higher than the graduate teacher in secondary education. When the teachers demand for pay rise, they are silenced through intimidation and many times their leaders are bought by politicians in the ruling party to call down their industrial actions. On July 5, 2022, there was a heated debate in Uganda's Parliament during a plenary session chaired by Speaker Anita Among over pay rise but it ended up not becoming helpful to the teachers, (The Daily Monitor July 06, 2022, <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/legislators-weigh-in-on-plight-of-teachers-3870610>). This kind of interference accounts a lot for poor performance of the teachers and school administrators – which eventually hinders improved learning outcomes. The morale of the teachers goes down, absenteeism and attrition take lead.

Usman et al (2007:207) stated that “an absent teacher often means no schooling for the child...” In this, Usman is trying to illustrate the effect of teacher absenteeism on the learning of the child as well as the child's performance. If leaders had a vice to fight in the school system, it is the vice of absenteeism. Government leaders need to combine efforts with school heads to ensure that the root cause for teacher absenteeism is addressed instead of escalating the problem and embark on intimidations that rather than solving the problem make it worse. Local government leaders, the politicians, have a role of ensuring that

teacher wellbeing is guaranteed to reduce absenteeism. This will help improve learners' performance in class, (Duflo et al. 2012).

The potential solutions to teacher attrition have political and / or monetary costs that the government usually take to be greater than the price of attrition. And in the end, government ministries undertake policies which are likely to lead to increased teacher turnover, not because they pursue high level of attrition but because they are looking for solutions to immediate problem at the time. (David W. Chapman 1994). In Uganda, teacher salaries are so low to a level of compelling fulltime teachers to think of supplemental employment in order to survive. For instance, teachers' net pay affords only about 15% of the teacher's basic needs given the current inflation and increased costs of living. This is what forces teachers to think of alternative occupations outside the known or official fulltime employment, leading to absenteeism. These occupations conflict, not only with their school responsibilities but also with the teachers' code of professional conduct, (David W. Chapman 1994).

Presenting at the 2008 World Bank forum for human development, Menno Pradhan revealed alarming high rates of teacher absenteeism based on a survey carried out by the World Bank research team on primary school teacher absenteeism from eight countries that were sampled from three continents. According to the survey, Uganda and India showed high rates while Peru posted lower rates. All these were attributed to the low motivational levels of teachers in these countries – a phenomenon that the political leaderships of these countries should have addressed earlier. In Europe, the governments pay teachers highly and their motivation to teach is seen in their performance and in the performance of the learners. The challenges of absenteeism, attrition, side income generating activities that are common among Uganda's teachers is not reported.

According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report (OECD 2022), Luxembourg (a European country) has the highest-paid teachers in the world. Another source indicates that a bachelor's degree holder is entitled to an initial salary of €67,000 (US \$70,323.20) per annum at the start of their teaching career. Other countries after Luxembourg are Germany and Switzerland. According to World Population Review (2022) at <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/teacher-salary-by-country>. In these

countries and many others of the kind, the political system has played a key role in shaping the education system to ensure high teacher retention levels, improved performance and improved learning outcomes, which, Ugandan teachers still look at as a dream that only God would miraculously help them achieve.

In the west where human rights and the political systems permit local people, including school children and teachers to possess firearms, safety in schools has been at stake, (Trade-Schools.net 2022). A few years ago, a string of high-profile mass shootings in the U.S. schools have occasioned dozens of deaths which caused debates regarding how best students safe can be kept safe. Many killings have occurred as a result of the liberalization of gun ownership, 17 people were shot at a high school in Parkland. This worried students and their teachers about gun violence at their school, and as a result, performance was greatly affected, (Trade-Schools.net 2022 - <https://www.trade-schools.net/articles/issues-in-education#major-issues>).

Kelsall et al., 2016 states clearly how the “Spoils-driven governance, corruption and patrimonialism became entrenched during the long regime of Mobutu Sese Seko” in the Democratic Republic of the Congo spoiling the country’s education system and all other systems. In Uganda, Bundibugyo in particular, corruption which used to be named among politicians has spread down to other public officers including the local school administration where, misuse of government money sent to develop schools is very common. School Head teachers have learnt from politicians how to steal government money provided that a clean accountability will be provided.

2.4. Involuntary / Forced Transfers and Teachers’ Performance

Involuntary transfer is the movement of a teacher or school administrator from one school location to another – usually imposed without any kind of prior negotiations (Noor *et al.* 2012). In many countries of the world, involuntary or forced transfers are not provided for in the policies that govern the workforce. The question remains: ‘How comes such transfers are common?’ Yes, in African countries where human rights are trampled upon and the rule of law suppressed, politicians have played a key role in this scenario. And Ugandan politicians are not innocent in this matter. Politicians take overall authority in

their countries at both local and national levels. In many local governments, as for Uganda's case, politicians override other heads of department including the department of education. In corrupt countries like Uganda, they are to determine who public service should recruit irrespective of academic merit. Muyingo (2010) states that transfer involves movement of personnel from one institution to another on request, merit or order from superiors. It can be on promotion or routine / periodical transfer not one given to reprimand the worker. Transfers initiated routinely by supervisors such as district education officer, the chief administrative officer are said to be administrative transfers. However, there are those recommended by officers outside the department for selfish reasons or malice. These are usually not received well and end up being imposed on or forced to them. Such are not good (Komakech, 2017).

Noor *et al.*, (2012) states how teachers and teacher unions have clearly shown that nothing affects students' learning outcomes or achievements more than the quality of their teachers. Noor adds that involuntary transfers affect teachers' efficiency and competence. This in turn lowers performance for both teachers and learners. Both stations, from where teacher is transferred and the new station get affected equally. The separation affects peer working relationships in that there will be a lapse of time for the new people to settle in and get work partners (Noor *et al.* 2012).

Forced transfers usually place teachers in hard-to-reach and hard-to-live places as it was found a deliberate move by education officers, sometimes influenced by politicians to exercise their power over them and sometimes as chastisement for what was deemed wrong doing or not being supportive to them. The teachers transferred in this manner usually face challenges related to distance, lack of finances to support them reach the stations of work, compromised teacher wellbeing – missing meals because the teacher is working far from the family, socio stress as there are very few or completely no friends at the start, (Komakech, 2017; Noor *et al.*, 2012). This also makes teachers take extended weekend breaks or public holidays to compensate for the time they have been missing their families. Here, involuntary teacher transfers become very challenging to school administration and to the teacher him / herself; and as a result, performance is compromised.

According to Bategeka & Okurut (2004), involuntary or externally imposed transfers of teachers to schools which are not of their desire or choice is usually disputed in many areas of the world in that the teachers' potentials and abilities are never, in such an occurrence, treated with fairness and sometimes taken for granted. Hitherto, Clotfelter (2006) maintains that the presence of a combination of management practices including staff development programmes but not limited to transfers have a positive relationship with student's performance and overall learning outcomes.

On the other hand, it should be understood that even a voluntary transfer can result into involuntary transfers for others. Abernath (2001) notes that a teacher may choose to be transferred for a variety of reasons such as the desire to work near home (call it a hardship transfer), personal struggles with administration or other staff members. In this case, a such transfer will not only affect the requester but also a section of other teachers who are moved to create a place for him or her. The school administration is also affected in this way (Masaazi, 1982).

Teacher or staff motivation plays a key role in ensuring teacher effectiveness according to Downes (2003). Luthans, F (2005), postulated that welfare schemes are important strategies that can be employed in motivating teachers for better job performance. These include, though they may not be limited to staff salary increment, gratuity, regular promotion, ensuring job security and establishing cordial relationship among teachers. Involuntary or forced transfers are red lights to insecurity on the job.

Adenike (2011) hypothesized that almost half of new staff during the first five years of their employment leaves the teaching field in countries where staff wellbeing and staff welfare is compromised. This was very peculiar to the situation in Uganda at the time of the study. Teachers were leaving the profession seeking early retirement.

Bategeka and Okurut (2004) complements a similar perspective indicating that involuntary transfers of teachers to different schools remain hotly contested in many areas because of the potential for teachers to be treated arbitrarily and unfairly. Yet Clotfelter (2006) argues that there are combination of management practices including staff development programmes but not limited to transfer that positively relate with student's performance. Motivation of teachers result into teacher effectiveness (Downes,2003).

A study conducted in Florida regarding the use of involuntary transfers established that schools that utilised this method or policy served the larger populations of low income and African- American students and were also low performers as scores indicated on Florida's accountability system. Such teachers also tended to have experience and tenure profiles more similar to that of staying teachers than voluntary excitors (Wanjuga, 2011). This also proposes that schools used transfer policy to remove less productive teachers who were unlikely to leave otherwise (Jepsen, 2005). Here, the method used was based on racial discrimination which is also a socio-political impairment that the west, particularly the United States of America is experiencing. In Africa, it happened in the south where apartheid policy was used by the White settlers.

Vogel and Lampkin (2007), also put it clear that schools and education authorities preferred using a flexible approach to having a rigid method of assigning teachers to schools for overall school quality and equity among schools and professionals. This was found as another way of motivating teachers and education officers in the service. However, in some cases, collective bargaining agreements constrained flexibility where authorities are constrained to transfer teachers involuntarily in order to solve an impending problem (Stank and Grisson, 2010). Cases resulting from bargaining for a place leading to transfer of other officers are, however, few and can be tolerated compared to massive transfers caused by a disgruntled political figure in the district.

Transfers sometimes occur due to promotions of staff. Armstrong (2012) mirrors promotion as one way of empowering management to provide an opening for an institution to fill more senior positions to help beneficiaries advance their careers within the same institution. Here, a promotion will likely result into a transfer or transfers or lateral moves. relatedly, it can lead to demotions, that is, downward moves and layoffs of some employees found unfit for the role(s) (Armstrong, 2012). These changes done out of good will are very good although they, too, have their own pitfalls. Such transfers administered for the good of the school are healthy unlike those caused by individuals who develop hatred for those with whom they have varying opinions socially, politically or even religiously. It is possible for normally promoted employees to face challenges as they deal with their new job positions because many good things come loaded sometimes with challenges and opportunities altogether.

Mulhern and Schunck (2005), states that personnel assignment flexibility can encourage teachers to feel comfortable with involuntary transfers. This is true when an involuntary transfer is carried administered with new assignments in form of promotion. Such a transfer ceases to be termed as a forced one as the employee feels his / her efforts have been acknowledge leading to a promotion.

Staub (2004) states that it may be by luck to find workers who were not doing well improving or performing better after they have been transferred involuntarily to new work stations. Here, Staub tries to make it clear that poor performance of the teacher should not be the reason for a forced transfer before counseling is done. Teachers need to be helped on how to improve before subjecting them to harsh work conditions that in the end make them worse than before. By so doing, the transferring officers continue to impair system that eventually results into poor learning outcomes.

Regarding teacher performance and learning achievement in sub-Saharan Africa, UNESCO (2012) stated that there are several ways in which forced transfers impact on teachers' average performance negatively. It lowers their zeal to do the work and makes them feel their efforts are not appreciated by their supervisors. When workers expecting to be appreciated for their good work done are instead rewarded with forced transfers, their morale dies, they become irregular at their new work stations, bully the children they teach and others eventually resign or resort to other activities or other vocations where their efforts will be rewarded or appreciated.

According to Alarm and Farid (2011) motivation of teachers is very important because it affects students greatly and directly. Marques (2010) supports this lack of motivation's negative effect when she states in her conclusion that motivation, satisfaction and performance are interdependent. Dornyei (2001) further states that teacher effectiveness affects students directly as there is a solid link between teacher efficiency and students' performance. Implying that the desired outcome for students can occur with the help of the teacher. So to say, lack of / low motivation of teachers negatively affects not only his performance but also the students' performance.

No wonder, Bennell (2004) indicates that teaching has become an engagement of the last resort among university graduates and other school leavers. Al-Samarrai and Bennell (2003) stated earlier that about one-half of junior secondary school leavers in Malawi and Tanzania who finished school in 1990 were employed as teachers in 2001. The corresponding figure for Uganda is a staggering 81 per cent. Subsequently, teachers often lack a strong, long term commitment to teaching as a vocation. On the other hand, the grade and pay for primary school teachers compared to secondary school teachers is generally much lower in developing countries, Uganda inclusive. www.eldif.org/sulltext/dfidtea.pdf. This means that where there is no alternative employment opportunities, becoming a school teacher is the only way to go. As a result, intrinsic motivation of primary school teachers is very low and affects their performance.

In Nigeria Adeyemo, Oladipupo and Omisore (2013) reported that the teachers' conditions of service that lack fringe benefits and teachers' promotion and in-service training have a direct influence on their performance as well as students' performance. In Tanzania according to a study done by Mruma (2013) motivation for people to join the teaching profession was only job security and the absence of alternative jobs otherwise the wages are very low to attract people from other professions.

Gitonga (2012) in Kenya reports, in his study, that working conditions have ensured teachers to perform better hence good students' performance in the examinations. The same study further concluded that there was a strong relationship between professional development and students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE).

According to Beech (2000), employees should be happy and satisfied with the organization they are working for if there is to be good performance. Many employee's lack of satisfaction occurs as a result of low salary wages, bad terms and conditions of service, lack of avenues for promotion, sectarianism, lack of job security and intimidation by their seniors, which make them perform poorly in their duties. Other challenges affecting the quality of teaching services include continued interference in teacher management by politicians and religious leaders (for church founded institutions); and the overlaps in the teacher managers' functions at school, district and national levels (Ibrahim, 2007).

World Bank (1990) in her report on teachers' conditions of service reported that in the absence of good teacher welfare, many teachers are currently providing much less and lower quality education than they are capable of. The report continues to suggest that the low welfare of teachers is a major contributory factor to the terribly low learning achievements of primary and secondary students (as cited in Bennell and Mukyanuzi, 2005).

While addressing the teachers' plight in Uganda regarding low remuneration of teachers and uncalled for transfers, UNATU(2012), revealed that if transfers were meant to help match teachers' to schools where their particular skills would make a more positive impact, as had been reiterated by the minister of education trying to cover up the messes of the local government leaders who transfer teachers without regard for the teachers conditions of service, then it was better if transfers were administered diligently to ensure that they do not seem a form of retribution but rather a means to harness and utilize the teachers skills fully.

An investigation in the neighboring republic of Rwanda in 2009 showed that only 11% of teachers who changed schools did so because their contract had expired and were not renewed (Grisson, Loeb and Nakashima, 2014). In other words, the change was inevitable because they served on a contract that got expired. On the other hand, teachers in Uganda are permanent and pensionable. They serve till the age of retirement not on contractual terms. This makes it understandable to administer transfers of teachers from one station to another. Transfers are normal and healthy if administered in accordance with the governing policies of the state.

Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports (2012), clearly indicated that transferring teachers who have overstayed at one work station is meant to boost performance in schools, thereby evenly distributing teachers to all the schools to ensure they are equally served with the right personnel. This can be viewed as forced transfers by some teachers especially where the rationale is not made clear to them. Where there is no sensitization on the purpose of transfers, a known term limit is supposed to be established or enacted so that teachers are fully aware that at the end of their tenure at a particular station, a new one will be allocated.

Uganda Public Service Standing Orders (2010) permits a teacher to seek for a transfer when need arises. In the same policy, the ministry of education is mandated to carry out

some transfers unconditionally if a teacher has overstayed in a school (Government of Uganda, 2010).

Mulkeen and Chen (2008) in a study carried out in Ghana also found that teacher deployment policy and practices which were not well rationalized led to disproportions in teacher distribution which left small primary schools in remote locations with inadequate number of teachers. This is what led to an increased teacher-pupils' ratio in schools in remote places. In addition, where the transfers are not sought for by the teacher, even the few who accept to work in such schools become irregular at work.

Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) argued that teachers who spend much time in an isolated village without access to further education become 'village men or women'. In addition, Noor et al. (2012)) warned that frequent change of teachers within the school term hinders good performance. Sometimes, the transition takes a long time, weeks or even month, to have the transferred teacher replaced and also the new teacher to settle at the new station of work. Many teachers transfer with their tools of work (that is schemes work, instructional materials and lesson plans). Given a poor record keeping system in schools, there is usually content lost or skipped when transfers occur within the term.

In addition, Mulkeen and Chen, (2008) in their study discovered that teachers are always reluctant to relocate to new areas, especially where the area language is different from their own. For instance, in Bundibugyo where ethnic clashes were common, teachers are always reluctant to live in places whose people have always clashed with them. Ethnicity in Bundibugyo defined the leadership of the district greatly. Forced transfers were not only to hard-to-reach places but also hard-to-live areas in many aspects including terrain and ethnicity.

Luschei and Chudgar (2015) in their study reported how the Mexican government avoids the transfer of teachers from challenging locations especially when they have already got used to these locations. The report indicated that government allows transfers only at a time a suitable replacement has been found. Forced transfers sometimes favor no side. One is forced to leave the station to give way for another who also is not willing to take up the place. But in Mexico, according to the report, there is at least one party willing to relocate

and is only permitted to do so when a suitable (willing) replacement is found. This makes it more of voluntary rather than involuntary transfer.

In many circumstances, teachers have always expressed a strong preference for urban schools because of the living conditions in urban areas that seem to be better than those in rural areas (Mulkeen and Chen, 2008). The report also adds that ‘hard-to-staff’ schools or those we may call ‘hard-to-reach’ schools usually face challenges of high teacher turnover and sometimes, even the few who accept to remain underperform because their locations isolate them from government inspectors. It is important to consider psychosocial support and other incentives to teachers occupying or teaching in such places.

Other studies by Hannay and Chism (1985) have revealed that teachers are more comfortable teaching particular grades or remaining in the grade they had taught for many years as this enhances their mastery of the content for those particular grades. This is also what makes them uncomfortable with involuntary or forced transfers as such will not always pay attention to the grades the teacher was handling.

In Uganda, Komakech (2017) reported that MoES representatives of various local governments at district level compromise the administrative performance of some head teachers especially those whose planning and actions depict high level of inventiveness looking at initiated brilliant development plans but are transferred before they fully implement them to completion. This still paints another evil of involuntary transfers of teachers and school administrators.

Komakech (2017) also reported that some school administrators, Head teachers for Uganda’s case, the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) chairpersons, the school management committee (SMC) heads habitually travel to the district headquarters to negotiate teacher transfers with the District Education Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, the District Chairperson and sometimes with the Resident District Commissioner (RDC). And in many cases, they coverup their individual interests in public interests. Ill-advisedly, the district officials often pay heed to their claims without thorough investigation or hearing from the teacher and his / her colleagues at work regarding the validity of any claims or allegations made.

Ministry of Public Service (MoPS 2015), in her document called ‘Uganda Public Service Standing Orders’ (UPSSO) in which employees’ working conditions are stated, documents that

public officers, teachers inclusive, shall be transferred after a continuous stay in their current posting for at least three (3) years of service. Additionally, the the document states that the transfer of staff shall be in the public interest and should never be used as a punitive measure or a way of disciplining a public officer. District Education Officers who continue to enforce teacher transfers contravene the policy. Transfers of this kind continue to impair the performance of teachers, school administrators and the students learning outcomes as well. For instance, in western Uganda, Save the Children International (SCI) was supporting 50 primary schools in Bundibugyo, Kasese and Ntoroko districts (19,19,12 respectively) under the ‘Enabling Teacher Approach’ project that was taking teachers through Teacher Professional Development (TPD) trainings for improved learning outcomes. In Bundibugyo district alone, where there were 19 schools in the project, 16 out of 19 (that is 84%) of the school administrators were forcibly transferred at the beginning of term one of 2021 at the influence of the newly elected district chairperson, contrary to the negotiations earlier held between district education department and SCI. At the same time, classroom teachers were equally affected and the then caretaking District education officer was also demoted to senior inspector of schools and his inspector was elevated to take his office because he was a close confidant of the chairperson. Negotiations to reverse transfers between SCI and the district chairperson failed. SCI had invested in these teachers and the ETA project was still running, with only 14 months left to carry out the end line survey for project phase out. This compelled SCI to start a fresh with new head-teachers and teachers yet the project was at its evening stage.

Education Policy Review Commission (1989) and Government of Uganda (1992) states that participation of government in teacher transfers is a move towards quality assurance and control. Government has right to take strategic decisions that would enable a teacher transferred to perform as expected. This is very health, however, when transfers are administered without prior data collection on who should be transferred and why the transfer is vital, government expectations may not be met. Instead, government efforts may be frustrated where a teacher accepts to go to the new work station because that is the only choice left lest s/he loses job. This leaves the teacher working only for the days’ worth; attend, sign the attendance register but do less or completely nothing in a day.

Many educators believe that engaging students in the learning process increases their attention and focus and makes them think critically. In addition, teachers need to master / become fully acquainted with their students in many ways: understanding how they learn, when they learn

better, their preferences and tastes as well as what annoys them. This kind of learning cannot take place within a month. It requires a teacher to spend more time with his / her students. This means that teachers need to take long with their children to become fully acquainted with them.

Reach Out Schools - Australia (2024), says “Taking a bit of time and care to get to know them as individuals can make you a more effective and impactful teacher. Beyond just finding out your students' names, ages, friendship groups and family backgrounds, it’s important to dig a bit deeper and discover their learning interests and strengths.” In their publication at <https://schools.au.reachout.com/student-wellbeing/why-its-important-to-understand-student-needs-and-interests>, knowing the learner’s learning strengths, practical and creative intelligence, and studying him or her as an individual is a key role of the teacher to help him support the learner improve holistically. This can only be possible if teachers are allowed to take enough time with their students rather than subjecting them to forced or unwanted transfers.

EduTrust (2021), clearly indicates that “Strong relationships with teachers and school staff can dramatically enhance students’ level of motivation and therefore promote learning. Students who have access to more strong relationships are more academically engaged, have stronger social skills, and experience more positive behavior. Unfortunately, too many students do not have this experience.” In addition to the above key personalities regarding the performance of the child is the parent. Parent-teacher relationship plays a big role in the effective learning of the child. Such a relationship with the child’s parent cannot be attained in just a short time. It requires the teacher to be in the school or work at the same workstation for a desirable number of years. This is because teacher interactions with parents is rarely a daily occurrence. It happens once in a while. Therefore, officers and heads of department charged with the transfer of workers, specifically teachers, should be enlightened on this fact.

The impact of a great teacher extends far beyond a student’s school years. Teachers can leave a lasting legacy by equipping their students with the tools and knowledge to navigate the world successfully. The lessons, values, and inspiration they impart can shape a student’s life trajectory. Students often carry the influence of their teachers into adulthood, impacting their personal relationships, career choices, and contribution to society. A passionate and dedicated teacher can ignite a lifelong love for learning and empower students to become influential individuals who make a positive difference in the world.

Teachers hold immense power to shape the lives of their students. Beyond academics, they significantly influence personal development, emotional support, career guidance, and long-lasting inspiration. Recognizing and celebrating the profound impact of teachers is essential for fostering a society that values education and appreciates the dedication of these extraordinary individuals who touch countless lives.

Among the so many things in which teachers impact the lives of their learners is their influence on student's academic growth and achievement. Teachers can nurture a love for learning, instill discipline, and provide guidance. They have the supremacy to trigger inquisitiveness, enhance critical thinking skills and encourage students to learn and complete school. This is true only when the teacher gets enough time with his students to help him understand their needs and address them.

Early career Framework (2021), states that teachers are role models who should provide guidance to fellow student in regard to their personal development and academic pursuit. They impart knowledge and instill values, ethics, and essential life skills. Teachers can foster resilience, empathy, perseverance, and integrity. By setting high expectations, providing constructive feedback, and promoting a positive classroom environment, teachers help students develop self-confidence, self-discipline, and a strong sense of identity. This implies that an ideal time in years should be allowed to pass by before deciding to change this teacher from one station to another.

The longer teachers work with a particular group of students, the more they learn about their cognitive and emotional needs. This familiarity helps in customizing the learning environment, promoting individualized instruction, and fostering a more supportive atmosphere (Pianta et al., 2012). This improved knowledge often leads to more effective teaching practices, such as differentiated instruction, that enhance student learning outcomes.

Further than teaching, teachers are trusted mentors who emotionally support their students. They create a safe and nurturing space where students can express themselves, share their concerns, and seek guidance. A caring teacher who listens attentively, offers encouragement, and understands each student's unique needs can profoundly impact their emotional well-being. This support can contribute to improved mental health, increased self-esteem, and a sense of belonging, positively affecting the student's happiness and personal growth.

According to Brainwonders (2024), teachers need to provide personalized guidance and support to individual students seeking to make well-informed career decisions. This process includes evaluating their interests, skills, values, and personality traits to assist in identifying potential career paths that align with their goals and aspirations. Teachers can shape their students' career choices and inspire them to pursue their passions. By sharing their own experiences, providing insights into different career paths, and highlighting the importance of education, teachers can help students discover their interests and talents. A supportive teacher can ignite a student's ambition, broaden their horizons, and encourage them to dream big. Through mentorship, teachers can guide educational pathways, scholarships, and opportunities, paving the way for students to achieve their professional goals. This is what requires a teacher not to be transferred anyhow. Relatedly, the student needs to get used to his teacher for him to be able to provide the necessary and appropriate career guidance.

Research suggests that long-term teacher-student relationships can create a foundation for trust and communication, leading to better classroom management and more effective teaching (Hattie, 2009). Teachers who work with the same group of students over extended periods can develop a deeper understanding of individual learning styles, challenges, and motivations, which allows them to tailor their teaching strategies more effectively.

Extended time spent with students offers teachers opportunities to engage in reflective practice. The ability to observe students' progress over time and adjust teaching strategies in response can contribute to the teacher's professional growth. According to Darling-Hammond (2000), long-term classroom experiences enable teachers to refine their pedagogical techniques, build confidence, and develop more sophisticated problem-solving skills.

Several studies have found that students benefit from having teachers who understand them well. For example, research by Loeb et al. (2005) suggests that teachers who form long-term relationships with their students are better equipped to address issues such as learning difficulties and behavioral challenges, leading to improved academic performance and student engagement.

Long-term engagement with students is also linked to higher job satisfaction for teachers. Teachers who work with the same cohort of students often feel a stronger sense of accomplishment as they witness student growth over time. This positive feedback loop can contribute to increased job satisfaction and higher retention rates (Ingersoll, 2001). When

teachers are satisfied with their work, they are more likely to engage in ongoing professional development, further improving their teaching skills.

2.5. Political Interference with School Administration

School administrators, including principals and supervisors, often experience political pressure that affects decision-making and school governance. Like the classroom teachers, school administrators are affected by politics in the same way.

Head-teachers are not able to defend their teachers from the fierce arm of politicians because they [head-teachers] face the same challenges with their teachers. Political interference in teacher recruitment has been linked to poor education outcomes. Many teachers are hired based on political connections rather than qualifications, leading to declining education standards (Okonkwo, 2019).

Sharma & Gupta (2022) states that in India, Local governments play a key role in school administration, but their biggest challenge is political interferences which often leads to frequent changes in school leadership and inconsistent policy implementation. Finland's depoliticized local education governance has, also resulted in high teacher autonomy, strong professional development, and superior student performance (Sahlberg, 2011).

According to Adams & White (2017), in politically stable systems, school administrators have the autonomy to make independent decisions, leading to effective school management. However, in politically influenced environments, administrators face external pressures that compromise leadership efficiency. Immediate transfers to hard to operate stations are made. This makes the whole exercise of transfers a form of punishment yet it should be taken as a policy issue. In Bundibugyo district, the Internal security officers (ISO) who claim they report direct to the office of the president intimidate head-teachers and even have them un-lawfully detained on trumped up charges if they have varying political viewpoints.

Frequent changes in administration as well as political changes at the local level often lead to unstable school leadership. Kumar (2020) found that in many developing countries, school principals are replaced when new local government officials take office, disrupting school

management and continuity. This is because different political leaders come with different tastes, different political ambitions and ideologies.

A study by Chen et al. (2022) revealed that in many countries, local governments allocate resources to schools based on political loyalty of the school administrators rather than actual needs, creating disparities in education quality. Schools headed by ruling party leaning administrators in politically favored districts receive more funding, while others struggle with inadequate infrastructure and supplies. This has been seen happening especially when the school is hit by natural disasters such as winds and floods. The response may be immediate depending on the level of political loyalty of the school leader, founders and political head of the district.

2.6. Low Wages for Teacher and Motivation.

In Uganda, teachers are some of the lowest paid civil servants. For primary education, the situation is worse. For pre-primary, government has always planned to have sector fully supported but implementation has, for many years, remained a big challenge. Politicians trivialize the pre-primary and primary teachers' work but continue to allocate high salaries to themselves in addition to very good allowances. According to World Bank (2021), in many countries, delays in salary payments due to political conflicts discourage teachers and reduce classroom engagement. In contrast, countries with stable local education governance such as Luxembourg, Switzerland, Germany and Japan give teachers prime consideration and consistent financial support leading to higher teacher motivation (Lee & Kawai, 2020 and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2024). This is clear contrast to the situation in Uganda which is actually made once by local government politicians who belittle the work of a teacher to a level of a useless, destitute and obligated servant. In Bundibugyo where the study was carried out, it was clearly revealed how teachers suffer great mistreatments at the hand of politicians.

Teachers' unions play a crucial role in advocating for better working conditions, but they can also become politicized. In some cases, unions align with political parties, leading to conflicts between educators and local governments (Garcia, 2021). Teachers in Bundibugyo revealed that the people who would be their voices have often been 'bought', 'silenced' by politicians. So they work like wondering sheep without a shepherd.

2.7. Summary of Literature Review

While teachers have the right to engage in political activities, there are several negative impacts of political involvement on their professional roles. The literature suggests that political engagement can compromise objectivity in the classroom, alienate students and parents, and create an unbalanced power dynamic. It may also lead to ethical dilemmas, reduce public trust in education, and contribute to teacher stress. The key challenge lies in balancing personal beliefs with professional responsibilities, ensuring that political activism does not overshadow the primary educational mission of fostering critical thinking, inclusivity, and intellectual development in students.

In this look at the influence of Local government politics on the performance of teachers and school administrators in government primary schools in Uganda with keen attention to Bundibugyo district, the related literature has shown that any form of political engagements in the running of education institutions and departments overtly and covertly has far reaching effects on teacher and administrative performance. Hitherto, Clotfelter (2006) argues that there are amalgamations of organizational practices at ministry level and at school level including staff development programmes, Low wages, Lack of interest, Lack of staff accommodation, poor accessibility of schools (remoteness) but not limited to political interferences, forming a set of intervening variables that positively relate with teacher and students' performance. Political interferences that have resulted into force transfers, unmerited favors like promotions and disfavours such demotions of teachers and school administrators has greatly affected them at individual, family and community levels. Ssekamwa (1997) suggests that involuntary or forced transfers of teachers to different schools remain ardently disputed in many areas of the world because of its subjective and unfair treatment of teachers. And in the end, transfers of this kind yield not the expected performance results and learning outcomes. Nevertheless, for the purpose of undertaking extraordinary disciplinary measures, involuntary transfers remain convenient means for school management (Armstrong, 2012).

For scholars, it is also significant to understand that involuntary transfers may not necessarily be termed as forced transfers if the purpose for which they are administered is fully explained to the victims to fully comprehend it. In an ideal world, teacher transfer should blend with the interests of the administrator and the teacher on transfer. What happens is that perpetrators of forced transfers associate the practice with the implementation of the contents of the public

service policies (Government of Uganda, 2010) whose goal is to make the teacher or school administrator effectively perform in his duties as Masaazi (1982) comments. Unfortunately, Ministry of Education and Sports (2015) declares that it is not conceivable to go by the interests of all the teachers because of the unique conditions in schools wherein a clear balance must be made to ensure transfers are carried out routinely. This seems to be a backup for the political perpetrators who have wretched havoc in their involvement with the civil service.

The literature generally supports the idea that long-term teacher-student relationships can lead to improved teacher performance. The benefits include stronger relationships, better knowledge of student needs, enhanced teaching skills, and greater job satisfaction. However, these benefits depend on the teacher's ability to adapt, reflect, and remain engaged with their students over time.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was used in the study and avails the study frame work for this research. In this chapter, a detailed presentation of the research design, the study population and sample used together with the sampling procedures, description of research instruments, validity and reliability of the instruments, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations during the study have been presented.

3.2. Research design

A research design is the conceptual structure within which a research is conducted and constitutes the blue print for measurement of the variables, collection and analysis of data (Creswell, 2009). It is the overall strategy that the researcher chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, effectively addressing the research problem. In here is the blueprint or outline for the collection, measurement and analysis of data collected.

A descriptive survey design was used in which data was collected from a representative sample to make inferences about the target population (Borg & Gall 1989). Khan (2006) describes a descriptive design as a method of collecting information by interviewing or the administering tools onto a selected sample. The design was used to collect information, regarding teachers' and head teachers' opinions, attitudes, habits or any variety of social issues regarding the influence of local government politics on their work in schools. The main advantage of this design is that it enabled the researcher to assess the situation within the study area at the time of the study.

Furthermore, the design was considered meaningful for the study because the researcher collected, interrogated, analysed and reported raw data without any undue influence over the variables guiding the study. The design was very useful in collecting information or data on attitudes and preferences, behaviour and experiences of respondents as they naturally occur (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). Detailed information was easy to collect from various categories of pre-determined target population in a short time and at a less cost (Neuman 2011). The design facilitates the collection and analysis of data using both quantitative and qualitative methods with the purpose of providing a better

understanding of the research problem and question (Creswell 2009). Furthermore, the design provided opportunity for equal representation of views among the respondents (Creswell, 2014).

3.3. Study Area

The study was conducted in Bundibugyo district of Western Uganda. Bundibugyo district is bordered by Ntoroko District to the north, Kabarole District to the east and southeast and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west. The main administrative headquarter of the district is located at 0°49'60" N, 30°15'0" E at an elevation of about 890 m above sea level

This district was chosen because government aided primary schools have been performing poorly for the last 30 years, a period in which the country has been under the same political party and system with one president for the last 35 years. In addition, there exists a gap on existing literature on how the prevailing political atmosphere affects academic performance of both teachers and students in government primary schools in the district and the region at large.

Figure 2: The map of Bundibugyo district under study.

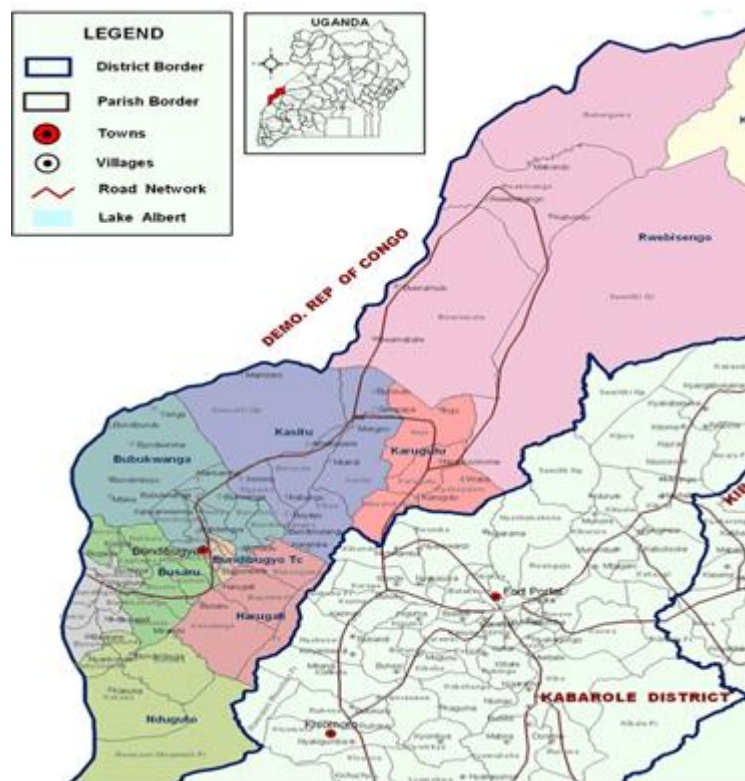


Fig. 2 Map of Bundibugyo district and her Neighbors

3.4. Study Population

A population refers to any group of establishments, people or objects that have common characteristics (Creswell 2009). Bundibugyo District has 107 government aided primary schools with a total number of 749 teachers and 107 Head teachers on government payroll (Ministry of Public Service Pay Roll 2022). The target population for this study constituted of primary school Headteachers and classroom teachers. The choice of the teachers was based on the fact that they are the primary target of any form of transfers while the Headteachers were selected also selected due to the fact that political interferences in the education department affected them directly as immediate supervisors of teachers who are also affected by the actions of politicians in schools and in the education department at both district and national levels. These are the ones who have been left in schools to administer them as care-takers for a long time without substantively appointing them and are disappointed at any time an interest in a particular individual arises. Additionally, head teachers are held accountable specifically for teachers' performance as well as overall learning outcomes of the learners in their schools.

3.5. Sample Size

According to Amin (2005) a sample is defined as a collection of elements of a population. A sample is a smaller group obtained from larger population as its representative. It saves time, cost and personnel required to allocate all the members (Creswell, 2009). A population of 198 teachers out of 625 teachers (31.7%) from 34 government aided primary schools were under study. This population constituting up to 31.7% of the entire population of teachers of the 34 out of 107 primary schools were representative enough. In addition, 33 head teachers out of 34 were also interviewed making 97 % response rate. The overall number of respondents reached was 231 making the overall response rate 37%.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select School Principals or headteachers while simple random sampling technique was used to select teachers. The simple random sampling technique gave equal chances for the teachers who were sampled in the study. While purposive sampling technique was appropriate for the study as it allows only those who are perceived to have specific information required for the study. According Gay and Airasian (2003) a sample size of 20% of the total population is representative enough. In this study, a total of 198 teachers 33 headteachers were sampled by the study constituting

37% of the total teacher population in the district. This was representative enough to provide the right inference.

Table 3. 1: Study Sample Distribution

Categories Under Study	Population size	Sample size	Sampling method
Head teachers (School Administrators)	107	34	Purposive sampling
Class Teachers	625	198	Simple random sampling
	732	232	

Source: Primary Data

3.6. Sampling Techniques and Procedure

According to Amin (2005), a sampling technique is a plan for obtaining a sample from a given population in such a way that the sample elements selected represent the population. A sample refers to a smaller, manageable version of a larger group. It is a subset containing the characteristics of a larger population. It represents the population as a whole without any bias toward a specific attribute.

The researcher employed both probability and non-probability sampling technique to select a sample size. Purposive sampling is non-probability sampling design in which the required information is gathered from specific targets (Sekaran 2005). The use of purposive sampling was to get views from Head teachers on the influence of local politics on their performance and the performance of their teachers. Simple random sampling which is probability form of sampling was also used, where every element in the population was given an equal chance of being selected as a subject (Sekaran 2003). With this technique the teachers who participated in the study were selected. It provided the right selection for teachers without any possible bias (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). According to Kothari (2004), simple random sampling is economical in terms of time and cost as earlier shown and observed by Kothari (2004). A two-stage sampling approach was used to select government aided primary schools from which a sample of teachers was obtained. That is a sample from a sample. This approach became appropriate for the time and resources available during the study. Schools were selected using simple random

sampling and a random sample of teachers was done to select teachers from earlier sampled government aided primary schools.

3.7. Data Collection Methods

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect data for a better understanding of the influence of political interferences in the school system on teacher performance of government aided primary schools (Creswell 2009).

In quantitative research the study established data in numeric form and logic. Quantitative research focuses on numeric and unchanging data and detailed, convergent reasoning rather than divergent reasoning. In this, questionnaires were administered to a sizeable number of respondents to allow generation of a variety of ideas about the research problem in a spontaneous, free-flowing manner.

On the other hand, qualitative research in this study involved collecting and analysing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions or experiences. In this, documentary reviews, focus groups and interviews, where the researcher personally interacted with the respondents in one-on-one conversations were used. Therefore, during data collection, the researcher utilized two methods explained hereunder.

3.8. Questionnaire Method

This is a research tool featuring a series of questions that the researcher used to collect data on the characteristics of respondents, attitudes, perceptions on influence of politics in the education systems and how it particularly affects the performance of teachers and school administrators in the district. The method worked appropriately to collect data from the respondents as all of them were able to decipher (read, interpret) the questions therein and write clearly. The method was also effective in a sense that it provided for collection of data from a large number of respondents across the district in a spontaneous, free-flowing manner in a shorter period. The method was quantitative in form and it eased the process of analysing and interpreting numeric data collected.

3.9. Interview Method

Kenneth and Bruce (2007) defines an interview as an oral questionnaire where researcher collects data through direct verbal interaction with participants in a one-on-one interaction. The method involved the presentation of oral, verbal stimuli and reply in terms of responses. This method was used to collect data from focus groups and head teachers of some selected schools. They were interviewed to get their views on a wide range of issues concerning political influences in the school and the system as a whole, teacher and learners' performance in government aided primary schools. The interviews allowed the researcher to further probe the respondents for more information and the respondents had an opportunity to elaborate and clarify their responses. It further enabled the researcher to record the responses with the right interpretation as language sometimes hinders correct presentation of information as articulated by the respondents.

3.10. Documentary Reviews

Document review is a way of collecting data by reviewing existing documents to gather background information, understand the history, philosophy and operation of the education department in the district and the system as a whole. Documentaries provided the researcher with supplementary information which, enriched the researcher with further probing questions to augment the interviews with headteachers and focus groups. The official documents reviewed were performance record files for the past years, policy documents, management, PTA and staff meeting minutes, circulars from the district authorities, policy standing instructions, individual school teacher performance records and Ministry of education sports transfer plans. All these were reviewed with a focus on both political influences, teacher transfers, promotions and appraisals. Primary documents refer to eye-witness accounts by people who experienced or participated in particular events. Secondary documents are records produced by people who are not present at the scene but with eye-witness accounts (Amin 2005). This provided for easy access to a vast amount of information at no cost.

3.11. Research Instruments

Research instruments are tools that are used to collect necessary information. This study used questionnaires, interview guides and documentaries for data collection. These instruments or tools were used as explained hereafter.

3.11.1. Questionnaires

According to Orodho (2004), a questionnaire is an instrument used to collect data, allowing a measurement for or against a particular viewpoint presented in the questionnaire. Sekaran (2006) also adds that a questionnaire is a pre-formulated written set of questions onto which respondents record their responses, sometimes guided or confined to closely defined alternatives. Questionnaires have the ability to collect big data quickly and in a short time. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the teachers in the selected schools in the area. The advantages of personally administered questionnaires were that it provided the researcher established a bond with the respondents and was able to fully identify himself with the teachers as a teacher furthering his education. This also encouraged the respondents to further their education. Given this rapport established, 100% of the respondents filled and returned the questionnaires within a short time. The tool contained questions which were both open and closed ended on the subject of political influences in schools, teacher transfers and their performance.

3.11.2. Interview Guides

According to Yin (2003), an interview is a two-way conversation that gives the interviewer the prospect to participate actively in the interview with the interviewee. Kahn and Connell (1957), suggested that interviews are a conversation with a purpose of collecting data. The use of interviews is one of the most important sources of data. The researcher used interview schedules to collect data from the school administrators (head teachers). Kerlinger (2003) stated that more people are ready to communicate orally than in writing as speech tends to flow simply if individuals are probed. Interview guides were used to enable the interviewer to remain focused on the topic and variables under investigation. Face to face schedules were planned with respondents and they helped the researcher to

obtain accurate and quality information from head teachers who were also the supervisors for all their teachers.

3.11.3. Documentaries

As a qualitative method of data collection, reviewing documents was done to provide data regarding teachers and school administrators' opinion on the effects of political interferences and transfers on performance. Quantitative statistical data was also generated from the statistical records and files where information on the study variables was generated. The researcher reviewed circulars and correspondences file, teachers' performance appraisal records, transfer records, students' performance file and SMC and PTA minute files.

3.12. Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability and validity are concepts used to evaluate the quality of data collection methods and tools in research. They indicate how well a method, technique or tool measures something. It's important to consider reliability and validity when you are creating your research design, planning your methods, and writing up your results, especially in quantitative research. Reliability is about the consistency of a measure and validity is about the accuracy of a measure. Questionnaires and interview guides are most widely used tools to collect data in education and social science research. Questionnaires in research help provide relevant information in a most reliable and valid manner. Accordingly, the accuracy and consistency of survey/questionnaire forms a significant aspect of research methodology which are known as validity and reliability.

3.12.1. Validity

Creswell (2009) states that validity refers to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretation of the test scores entailed by use of tests. The validity of a research instrument is the extent to which it measures what it is supposed to measure. Validity is the precision and significance of an inference based on the research results. It is the degree to which results obtained from analysis of data is validated in terms of content. As soon as the research tools were developed, the researcher embarked on a pre-test of the

tools in order to ascertain their validity. The following formula to calculate the validity in the study as suggested by Creswell (2009) was applied:

Content validity index (cvi)

$$\text{CVI} = \frac{\text{Number of items declared valid by judges}}{\text{Total number of items}} = \frac{n}{N}$$

Where n = items that are rated relevant N= total number of items incorporated in the tools.

Table 3.2: Content Validity Index Results

Variables	Responses rated as valid	Total Number of Items	Content Validity (CVI)
Political Interferences	190	238	0.8
Forced transfer	170	238	0.7

Average CVI derived from the table = $\frac{0.8 + 0.7}{2} = 0.75$

2

Cresswell (2009) notes that if the instrument has an average index of 0.7 or above it is accepted as valid. In this case the CVI for each section was 0.7 and above, implying that the instrument was valid for the study.

3.12.2. Reliability

Reliability of a research instrument is the extent to which the results can be reproduced when the research is repeated under the same conditions by checking the consistency of results across time, across different observers, and across parts of the test itself. It is its ability to consistently measure characteristics of the same interest over time. Reliability of a research instrument is the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trails. If a researcher administers a test to a subject twice and gets the same score on the second administration at the first test then, there is reliability of instrument (Mugenda and Mugenda 2005). Accordingly, reliability test for the questionnaire that the researcher used was analyzed using SPSS tool to establish whether the instrument used was consistent in measuring the concepts that it intended to measure.

Cronbachs Alpha coefficient was used to determine stability and consistency of the research instruments. The Cronbachs Alpha-a test (min=0.6) measured the scale reliability for the internal consistency of the items. Alpha Coefficient was applied as shown hereunder:

$$a = \frac{N}{N-t} = \frac{\text{total Variance-sum of individual variance}}{\text{Total variance}}$$

The δ range slightly above 0.6 indicates reliability of research instruments as stated by Amin (2005). Below are the computed alpha Cronbach's coefficients in the table.

Table 3. 3: Reliability Index on the Questionnaire

Variable	Number of Items / Responses	Cronbach Alpha
Political Interferences	190	0.69
Forced transfers	170	0.62
Total	360	0.655

Source: Primary data

The table above shows a Cronbach alpha of 0.69 on political influences with 190 responses, 0.62 for forced transfers with 170 responses, making a total of 360 responses for all the variables under study making an average of 0.655. The tool therefore passed the test of reliability for each of the variables and for all the variables since they were all greater than the minimum of 0.6 (Amin, 2005). The instruments were therefore suitable for data collection.

3.13. Data Collection Procedures

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from Bundibugyo district education department as a permission to allow him go around the schools collecting data after explaining to the education officers how he is a research student. The researcher made appointments with the respondents through the head teachers prior to data collection dates. A pre-test of data collection instruments was conducted in the area of study to help confirm the validity and reliability of the instruments once they are applied. The researcher then

proceeded to respondents to administer the questionnaires, conduct interviews and review some important documents. Some documents such as the public service standing orders, the education act 2008 and a copies primary leaving examination results over the years were reviewed right from the district headquarters where they were readily available.

3.14. Data Analysis Procedure

As for Kombo and Tromp (2013), data analysis refers to an investigation of what has been collected in a survey and deductively make inferences. Yet Oso and Onen (2009), state that data analysis entails separation of data into constituent elements that are examined to distinguish its component parts or elements discretely in relation to the whole. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were both used in analyzing data. Quantitative data from the questionnaires was done by coding. This was then entered into the system for computation of descriptive statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS Version 21) was used to run descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages so as to present the quantitative data in form of tables and graphs based on the research questions and study variables. The study also used inferential statistics which included correlation analysis to test the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent ones. Qualitative data generated from open ended questions were categorized into themes in accordance with the research objectives and reported in narrative form along with quantitative data. Qualitative data was used to support the quantitative data.

3.15. Measurement of Variables

In a look at the influence of local government politics on the performance of teachers and school administrators in government aided primary schools, enough data was collected and measured using the five points of the Likert scale (1932). The Likert scale (typically) provides five possible answers to a statement or question that allows respondents to indicate their positive-to-negative strength of agreement or strength of feeling regarding the question or statement. The Likert scale assumes that the strength/intensity of an attitude is linear, that is, on a continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree and assumes that attitudes can be measured. Ordinal measurement was also applied as nominal scale on background information while non-categorical data were obtained in a narrative form based on the study objectives. The study used the non-categorical data obtained through

interviews, focus group discussion and documentary review methods which were descriptive to create a relationship between political influences in education, involuntary teacher transfers and teacher performance in government primary schools.

3.16. Ethical Considerations

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) fraud is an act where a researcher creates data that he has not actually collected and presents it in methodologies and results in research. According to Creswell (2009), ethical issues arise in discussions about codes of professional behaviour of the researcher.

The study investigated the influence of local government politics on the performance of teachers and school administrators in government aided primary school of Bundibugyo district. The researcher went to the field, collected data from the various responded whom he approached lovingly and carefully, explaining the purpose of the study as had been detailed previously when the appointment was made. In this study, it was imperative to consider ethical aspects at every stage of the enquiry. All respondents were fully informed in advance concerning the objectives of the study and reassured that their responses were to be treated with utmost confidentiality and be used only for academic purposes and specifically, for the purpose of the study being carried out. The schools and teachers under study were contacted first through their head teachers in advance and meeting dates were fixed for the interview for each school as well as the issuing of questionnaires for the teachers. Findings from the data collected were stored in a confidential closet to be disposed of as soon as the study report is finally graded.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTEPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which local government politics impact the performance of teachers and administrators in Bundibugyo district of western Uganda. In this chapter, the study presents, analyses and interprets the study findings based on the data collected from the respondents using questionnaires, documentaries and interview guides. The subsection presents the response rate, background information on respondents and analysis of the study findings in relation to specific objectives.

Table 4.1: Response rate

School	Sample size	Actual no. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
1	16	5	31
2	18	5	28
3	20	6	30
4	18	6	33
5	19	5	26
6	17	5	29
7	18	5	28
8	22	6	27
9	18	5	28
10	18	6	33
11	17	5	29
12	18	5	28
13	20	9	45
14	21	7	33
15	17	6	35
16	18	5	28
17	19	7	37
18	21	7	33

19	17	5	29
20	15	5	33
21	19	7	37
22	16	5	31
23	18	5	28
24	21	8	38
25	15	6	40
26	21	8	38
27	19	6	31
28	17	5	29
29	18	5	28
30	19	5	26
31	17	5	29
32	18	5	28
33	22	8	36
34	18	5	28
No. of Teachers	625	198	31.7

Source: Primary data

Gay and Airasian (2003) put it that a sample size of 20% of the total population is representative enough. The summary of the study in Table 4.1 above indicates that data was collected from a sufficient number of respondents and therefore the collected data and the findings from it can be relied on. The lowest response rate was 26%, which is above 20% according to Gay and Airasian (2003).

However, according to Mugenda (2009) a response rate of 50 per cent is adequate for analysis and reporting; while a rate of 60 per cent is good and a response rate of 70 per cent and above is excellent. A total of 230 questionnaires were planned and distributed. However, 198 questionnaires were correctly filled and returned. 34 key informant interviewees were planned and 33 of them were successfully interviewed. While the response rate for the teachers' questionnaires was 31.7 %, that for the interviewees was 97%, which, according to Mugenda (2009) was excellent. This implied that the data collected were adequate to support the outcome of the study as a representation of the surveyed population.

4.2 Characteristics of Respondents

In this section, the study presents the background characteristics of the 231 respondents that answered the questionnaires and the interview questions. These characteristics include age of the respondents, sex, educational level or professional qualifications and number of years in service.

4.2.1. Age of Respondents

Respondents were requested to indicate their age groups to find out their distribution by age and the findings are presented in table 4.2 below

Table 4.2: Age of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
Below 30 years	33	14.2
30 - 39 years	82	35.5
40 - 49 years	77	33.3
50 - 59 years	39	17
Total	231	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.2 shows that out of the 231 respondents that provided their age, the highest number of respondents measured at above 82% were between ages 30 to 49 years. This means that the respondents were capable of providing credible information given their tender ages that would provide them good memory of facts. These responses were from a group of people that could be relied upon during data processing and reporting.

4.2.2. Sex of Respondents

Respondents were requested to indicate their sex, so as to establish whether both sexes were well represented in the research study. The findings are presented in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Respondents by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
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Male	121	52.3
Female	110	47.7
Total	231	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.3 shows that both male and female respondents participated in the study, with the males constituting the majority, 121 (52.3%). This means that slightly more male are engaged in the teaching service. The implication is that the information gathered regarding transfer and performance of teachers were representative views of the relationship transfer and teachers' performance.

4.2.3. Education Level of the Respondents

Respondents were also requested to indicate their highest levels of education. The aim was to establish their distribution by education levels and the findings are presented in table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Education Level of Respondents

Education level	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	155	67.1
Bachelors	67	29
Masters	9	3.9
Total	231	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.4 shows that the majority of the respondents, 67.1% diploma holders. For primary education in Uganda, category of teachers who take the majority possess relevant qualifications required to perform their duties. This is because primary teachers in Uganda start teaching after certificate level. They keep on upgrading up to the acquisition of Masters or even beyond as time goes on. This also means that they possess the right experience and understand the education system thoroughly. Thus they were also able to

understand the study variables correctly. The researcher was therefore comfortable that the information provided was very credible and could be relied on during data processing.

4.2.4. Number of Years in Service

The data on the number of years each respondent spent in service collected and the findings are presented in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Number of Years in service

Number of years in service	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5 years	3	1.3
5 - 9 years	14	6
10 - 19 years	79	34.2
20 - 29 years	93	40.3
30 years and above	42	18.2
Total	231	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.5 shows that out of the 231 respondents that answered the questions, the highest number of respondents, 172 (74.5%) spent between ten to twenty nine years in service. It is fair to conclude that the respondents were of high professional experiences which qualifies the information they provided to be credible enough for the inferences made during the study.

4.2.5 Number of Years spent in the current school

The data regarding the number of years each respondent had spent in the current school is presented in table 4.6 below. It explains whether there were recent transfers or not.

Table 4.6: Number of years spent in the current school

Number of years spent in the current school	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5 years	142	61.5

5 - 9 years	54	23.4
10 - 19 years	22	9.5
20 - 29 years	13	5.6
Total	231	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.6 shows that out of the 231 respondents that filled the questionnaire and those that answered interview questions, the highest number of respondents, 142 (61.5%) had spent less than five years in the current school. They had recently been transferred. This means that at time of the study, transfers had just taken place. And this was massively carried out based on the numbers. Routine transfers are very healthy but respondents demonstrated that these transfers were politically motivated and therefore imposed on them. This affected their motivation to do the work which should account for the poor performance of both learners and teachers in Bundibugyo district based on the data from the district.

4.2.6. Number of years spent in the previous school

The number of years each respondent had spent in the previous school is presented in table 4.7 below. This was based on the data collected from the questionnaires and interview guides.

Table 4.7 Number of years spent in the Previous school

Number of years spent in the current school	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5 years	13	5.6
5 - 9 years	58	25.1
10 - 19 years	145	62.8
20 - 29 years	15	6.5
Total	231	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.7 shows that out of the 231 respondents that filled the questionnaire and those that answered interview questions, the highest number of respondents, 145 (62.8%) had taught

in the same school for 10 or more years without getting transferred. The same table shows more 58 respondents (25.1%) who had stayed in the same school for 5 to 9 years untransferred. Suggesting that in the past, transfers followed the teachers' conditions of service in Uganda in which it is made clear that a teacher shall seek and obtain transfer from one station to another when need arises and that for any transfer made by the local government authorities, the person affected shall sign a consent or acceptance form. This implies that there were never forced transfers and that teachers stayed at one station for as long as they wished to. This is what boosted their motivation to do the work because they worked in environments of their choice.

4.3 Presentation of Results

4.3.1 Findings Regarding Teachers' Involvement in Politics

Teachers' involvement in politics, one of the independent variable was measured in the questionnaire using 4 different statements to which the respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. Agreement or disagreement was on the issues of teacher involvement in politics and political interference in civil service matters leading to uncalled for teacher transfers, often executed by force. The findings are presented in table 4.8 below. The researcher used qualitative methodologies to obtain data using the questionnaire.

Table 4.8 Numeric Data

Teachers Involvement in Politics		SA	A	NS	D	SD
1.	Some teachers are involved in politicking during the campaign season.	89	112	19	6	5
2.	It is impossible for teachers to remain neutral during political campaigns for political offices.	66	65	26	55	19
3.	Politicians provide the much-needed support to our schools	3	2	15	132	79
4.	Teachers support political aspirants not for the good of their schools but for their survival.	59	71	55	33	13

Key: SA-Strongly Agree, A – Agree, NS – Not Sure, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree.

Table 4.8 shows that 201 out of 231(87%) of the respondents agreed that they teachers got involved in politics during the political campaign season. This means that teachers, in the first place did not adhere to the teachers' code of professional ethics, the public service act, as well as the education act of 2008. The implication to this phenomenon is that the teachers who supported the candidate that did not go through were publicly known as opposers of the current politician(s) who took over the new office(s). Both groups are rewarded accordingly as politicians usually have the tendency of retaliation.

Regarding the issue of the possibility of teachers remaining neutral during the political campaign season for political offices, 131 out of 231 teachers (56.7%) confirmed to the researcher that it is impossible for teachers to remain neutral during political campaigns for political offices. During a time for focus group discussions, one discussant had shown clearly that teachers that teachers were not special beings to remain silent during the season. He further reiterated that the blood that runs in the politicians is the same blood that runs in the teachers. It was not possible for teachers to pretend not to have sides when in reality they have. Some of the politicians were even close relatives and friends of some of the teachers which compelled them to take sides with them.

On the question about whether Politicians provide the much-needed support to the schools compelling the teachers to side with them during the campaigns, 211 out of 231 teachers (91%) did not agree. Only about 9% agreed. This meant that teachers did not support politicians because politicians supported their schools. On the contrary, their allegiance to politicians was on a personal, not community, benefit. Personal benefits included getting transfers to the much coveted work stations for some teachers but also not forgetting the spiritual law of association as stated by King Solomon of Israel (Proverbs 13:20) in which he clearly seems reveals that when you hang around people who are wiser than you, their wisdom will rub off on you and your life will be built up. Some of these teachers supported politicians just for fame. For if one choses to hang around fools and backward people, one's life will crumble to pieces.

The above was confirmed by the follow-up question whose answers revealed the major reason why teachers support political leaders. Regarding whether teachers support political aspirants not for the good of their schools but for their personal survival, 130 teachers, that is 56% of the respondents affirmed that the support they rendered was for personal survival.

4.3.2. Findings regarding Teacher Transfers and Performance

The impact of teacher transfers on their performance as well as the performance of the learners was measured using four (4) important questions. The responses to these questions were clearly recorded as shown in table 4.9 below:

Table 4.9 Teacher Transfers and Performance

	Transfers and Performance	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1.	From experience, teacher transfers do not affect student performance in schools.	9	17	47	67	91
2.	Teachers should be transferred at any time from one station to another to improve performance.	3	11	27	110	80
3.	Some political administrators in the district influence transfers	66	113	32	11	9
4.	Teacher and headteacher transfers are entirely carried out by the head of department (District Education Officer) without political influences.	15	25	23	99	69

Key: SA-Strongly Agree, A – Agree, NS – Not Sure, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree.

On the issue of whether teacher transfers did not affect student performance in schools, the study revealed that transfers affected learner performance as was affirmed by 158 out of 231 teachers (68%). About 20% of the respondents were not sure. They seem not to have studied the situation to come up with the right inference. Studies have shown a clear link between teacher job satisfaction, teacher performance and improved learning outcomes. If transfers affected student performance, it implies that teacher performance was affected first. McWherter (2012); Crawford (2017); Andrew (2017) et al., have all shown that

teacher job satisfaction will have a positive impact on students' achievement. This also implies that any form of dissatisfaction will have a corresponding negative impact, which, in this case is poor performance.

Regarding whether Teachers should be transferred at any time from one station to another to improve performance, 190 out of 231 respondents, that is 82% of the respondents disagreed saying that teachers need to fully get used to the learners, the environment, school administration and management fully in order to perform well. This also helps the school administrators and managers to identify teacher support needs and provide the necessary support. It also provides the supervisors with the knowledge of who among the staff can do what and who cannot. Thus teacher transfers need to be planned well and teachers should be given enough time at every station to familiarize with everyone there for improved learning outcomes. The respondents further revealed that as teachers fully establish areas of weaknesses of their children, and begin to devise means to bridge the performance gaps, they should not be moved to new stations where they start from scratch. This keeps a vicious circle of poor performance among the learners as well as the teachers. For the passing of the learners is the teacher's success. When learners keep failing, it is the teacher failing on his part to ensure that he transfers knowledge onto the learners effectively.

Regarding whether some political administrators in the district influenced transfers, 197 respondents making up to 77% of all the respondents who provided responses on this question, responded agreeing that the vice was common in the district. One respondent in her own words said, *"some teachers are big brothers and big sisters of important politicians. Others are their wives. They dictate where they should teach or go by their tastes and preferences."* With such a statement, it is easy to agree that the education department is not independent. There are always external influences that the officers have got to obey.

Regarding the issue of whether teacher and headteacher transfers are entirely carried out by the head of department (District Education Officer) without political influences, the respondents showed that politicians influence these transfers so much. This question was not very different from the former. However, its emphasis was on school administrators. To this, 168 out of 231 respondents making up to 72.7% disagreed with the fact that the district education office could

carry out transfers independent of political influences. This showed that even school administrators or head teachers were transferred based on certain people's preferences.

During a one-on-one discussion with the teachers regarding untimely transfers, majority argued that it is a breach of the teachers' terms and conditions of service to transfer teachers at any time and to any place without providing them an opportunity to consent to the transfer or suggest otherwise. Majority of the respondents, up to 172 (74.5%) agreed that transfers have a negative effect on School overall performance where both teachers and administrators as well as the learners become affected.

An interviewee, a school administrator, also noted that *"...when they dump us into the schools of their choices just to show us that they matter more than us, we also do our work in a way that makes the end reveal who actually matters in this game of teaching young people."*

This means that teachers, as well as school administrators play a key role in the performance of the learners. They should be handled with care when it comes to transfers and other benefits. When one of the key informants was asked the underlying cause for untimely and forced teacher transfers in Bundibugyo district he noted that *"...the biggest challenge in this district is our local politics which we cannot avoid to get involved in. This is because our politics here is too much an issue of tribe against another rather than development. And when you belong to a tribe, you have to stand out to support it. This is what divides us into political factions in the civil service."*

This key informant revealed that the issue of politics is way much bigger in Bundibugyo that it makes the teachers and other civil servants fully absorbed into it, where the two tribes seem to be in a completion.

4.3.3. Forced Transfers

In trying to ascertain the impact of forced transfers for teachers and school administrators, three questions were asked. The responses are shown in table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10 Forced Transfers

	Forced Transfers	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1.	Most of the transfers in Bundibugyo are in one way or the other imposed on teachers.	95	101	19	9	7

2.	Forced Transfers have a negative effect on School overall performance (teachers, administrators & students).	93	108	17	5	8
3.	Forced transfers have caused more trouble than the problem they are planned to solve.	66	103	42	11	9

On the issue of whether most of the transfers in Bundibugyo were in one way or the other imposed on teachers, 196 respondents out of 231, that is 84.5% agreed that transfers in Bundibugyo were imposed on teachers. During a one-on-one conversation, one responded indicated that after her transfer, she was compelled to go to office to seek for a slight change which would favor her in terms of distance from his home to her school but was repulsed on intimidations that she would face disciplinary action.

On the question of whether forced Transfers have negative effects on School overall performance (teachers, administrators & students), 201 respondents out of 231, making 87% affirmed that the practice of forced transfers has serious negative effects on the performance of not only learners but also their teachers and school administrators. This is what negatively affects the desired learning outcomes in the end.

5. CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents a summary of the key findings during the study, the conclusions obtained during and from the investigation and recommendations constructed from the results as guided by the research general objective and specific objectives. The specific objectives included, examining the effect of politics on the performance of school administrators in Bundibugyo district, discussing the cause for involuntary or forced transfers of teachers and school administrators and determining the extent to which involuntary transfers affect the performance of teachers and school administrators in Bundibugyo district. Overall, this study examined the influence of politics on the performance of teachers and school administrators, focusing on how local government politics affects the education system.

5.2. Discussion of Findings and Implications

The study revealed significant political interference in the education sector, including politically motivated transfers, favoritism in promotions and incentives, but also, the direct involvement of teachers in politics. These issues have negatively affected the performance, morale, and professionalism of educators, ultimately impacting the overall education system. The research findings revealed that local government politics significantly impacts the performance of teachers and school administrators as shown hereunder.

5.2.2. Forced Transfers and Teachers' Performance

Findings from the field show that there is a weak system of transfers of teachers in the district. The political head of the district demands to see how the deployment of teachers has been done with intent to alter information to suit his / her political motives. A very big relationship between forced transfers and teachers' performance has been seen. There was a significant negative impact on teachers' performance as a result of forced or unsolicited teacher transfers. Moreover, Prosser and Trig well (1997) writes that when a teacher stays longer at the same workstation, he or she gets an opportunity to build strong relationships with his or

her students thereby promoting a characteristic spirit of a culture or community as manifested in its attitudes and aspiration. The school's culture is built by determined workers who devote enough time to create a routine and put important structures in place.

Unfair, unplanned and impulsive transfers can adversely corrupt the employee's enthusiasm, thereby impacting productivity negatively. The negative mentality that none will keep in the same place of work corrupts the teachers and deters their effectiveness, especially coupled with lack of incentives.

Political influences play a key role in determining which teachers and administrators get transferred to which place or promoted to which office. Some parts of the district are hard to reach and hard to live. Such places were turned into dumping sites for teachers and other civil servants who did not support the 'big' political officers in government. Teachers and school administrators are frequently transferred as a form of political reward or punishment. Reward for supporters, and punishments for critics and non-supporters during a political bid. Some educators face forced transfers for not supporting particular politicians during election campaigns, disrupting school stability. Promotions are supposed to be based on merit. Promotions are often based on political connections rather than merit, discouraging hardworking and qualified teachers. Certain teachers receive special incentives not because of their performance but due to their affiliations with politicians. Incentives include appointment to invigilate, supervise examinations, office-caretaking allowances, and many more. This creates inequality and discourages hardworking teachers.

5.2.3. Political interference

Unplanned administrative decisions and policy Implementation by both politicians and civil servants have corrupted the system. School administrators face pressure from politicians to implement decisions that may not align with the best interests of education. This weakens the autonomy of educational leadership. The hiring processes are also impaired by local government politics. Road construction to places or schools where teachers aren't good government supporters will often take long or continue impassable all the time.

Coupled with the issue of political inference is the erosion of job security and work morale. Teachers and school administrators feel insecure in their positions due to political

interference. They live in fear of losing their positions if they do not support influential politicians. This affects their morale, input, leading to reduced productivity (output), the need for early retirement, and in the end, there is poor learning outcomes. Political interference lowers morale and professionalism, because decisions are not based on qualifications or performance. These issues contribute to a declining education standard, as teachers focus more on political survival rather than improving student learning outcomes.

5.2.4. Increased absenteeism, attrition and escapism

Increased absenteeism, attrition and escapism was found rampant due to low or reduced motivation / interest in the work of teaching. Teachers were found involved in different business activities including selling second-hand outfits, shoes, commercial riding (specifically men) and all forms of activities for survival. This is what increased absenteeism, attrition and escapism. Teachers find other things to occupy them instead of paying full attention to their students.

Humm Patnode et al (2018), suggest that poor attendance is one of the best predictors of later school drop-out. This is said in view of the learners. However, in recent years in Uganda, teacher absenteeism has culminated into serious demand for early retirement as a result of lack of interest.

The Nile post of August 8th, 2024 (at <https://nilepost.co.ug/education/211137/workers-mp-raises-concerns-over-too-many-retirement-of-teachers>) reported a Member of Parliament representing workers expressing high concern over the high number of teachers applying for early retirement, warning of a potential crisis in the education sector in Uganda. Between 2022 and 2024 in Uganda, there has been a high rise in the number of teachers applying for early retirement. Many factors have been mentioned as key contributors to this high level of attrition. Low teacher motivation, the quest to join politics which tend to influence every aspect of life in society, disregard for teachers by politicians, to mention but a few, are some of the causes that have been named in this matter.

5.3. Conclusion

The study concludes that political interference in the education sector has negatively impacted the performance and professionalism of teachers, school administrators, and the

education system as a whole. The excessive involvement of local government politicians in educational issues that has resulted into forced transfers, politically influenced promotions, teacher involvement in politics, and administrative manipulation have created an unstable educational environment. This situation not only discourages teachers but also compromises the quality of education, making it difficult to achieve long-term educational goals. Unless measures are put in place to depoliticize the education sector, provide ways that will make educationists stick to the educational policies and education act, the negative effects highlighted in this study will continue to disorient the system, weakening it further and beyond.

5.4. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

There should be great emphasis on Merit-Based Promotions and Transfers should be administered as stipulated in the teachers' conditions of service as stipulated in the Education Act (2008). The education sector should establish transparent policies where promotions and transfers are based on qualifications, experience, and performance rather than political influence. If the sector finds it difficult, let it hire a special bias-free or impartial recruitment team to avoid messing up the system. This will reduce issues of conflict of interest, corruption and nepotism.

Government should establish independent Education Boards or independent bodies to oversee the management of teachers and school administrators, reducing political interference in decision-making.

Government should strengthen all legal Frameworks and Policies on education. Stronger laws should be put in place to protect teachers and school administrators from political manipulation. Any political interference should be met with legal consequences.

Teachers and education stakeholders should be educated about their rights and encouraged to speak up against unfair political influence and unfair treatment. Many teachers have not

had access to important policies, the local government act, the education act (2008), Teachers terms and conditions of service, teachers' code of professional conduct, and many other supporting documents. These are important to guide and direct teachers.

Government Commitment to Educational Integrity should be improved. The government should reinforce the autonomy of the education sector and ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of quality education rather than political gain.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies could explore the long-term effects of political interference in education and how different countries have successfully minimized this issue. Additionally, research could focus on the perspectives of policymakers in addressing these challenges.

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APPENDICES

Appendix i:

QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is **Kimulya Adorable**, a student of **Selinus University of Science and Literature** carrying out a study on “*The influence of local government politics on the performance of school teachers and administrators in Uganda,*” A case study of Bundibugyo district local government” in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of **Doctor of Philosophy in Education Management and Administration**. The information you will provide will be treated with a lot of confidentiality as this is intended only for academic purposes. Nothing else beyond that.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. (a) Name of Respondent
- (b) School of respondent
- (c) Designation of Respondent

2. Age Range:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| a. 20-27 years | ☐ |
| b. 28-36years | ☐ |
| c. 37-45years | ☐ |
| d. 46-55 years | ☐ |
| e. 55 years and above | ☐ |

3. gender

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| a. Male | ☐ |
| b. Female | ☐ |

4. Education Level

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Master's Degree | ☐ |
| b. Bachelor's Degree | ☐ |
| c. Diploma | ☐ |
| d. Certificate | ☐ |
| e. Any other please specify..... | |

5. Years Spent in the Current School

- a. 1 – 2
- b. 3 – 4
- c. 5 – 6
- d. 7 and above

6. Years Spent in the Previous School

- a. 1 – 2
- b. 3 – 4
- c. 5 – 6
- d. 7 and above

SECTION B: Teachers' Involvement in Politics.

Dear respondent please read the questions in the table below and answer by filling the number that corresponds with your agreement of the statement, where:

5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Not Sure, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

7	Teachers Involvement in Politics	SA	A	NS	D	SD
i.	Some teachers are involved in politicking during the campaign season.					
ii.	It is impossible for teachers to remain neutral during political campaigns for political offices.					
iii.	Politicians provide the much-needed support to our schools					
iv.	Teachers support political aspirants not for the good of their schools but for their survival.					
8	Transfers and Performance	SA	A	NS	D	SD
i.	From experience, teacher transfers do not affect student performance in schools.					
ii.	Teachers should be transferred at any time from one station to another to improve performance.					

iii.	Forced Transfers have a negative effect on School overall performance (teachers, administrators & students).					
iv.	Some political administrators in the district influence transfers					
v.	Teacher and headteacher transfers are entirely carried out by the head of department (District Education Officer) without political influences.					

SECTION C (*Kindly provide all the information you are able to get*)

9. What do you think is the underlying cause for untimely teacher transfers in Bundibugyo district?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your cooperation.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is **Kimulya Adorable**, a student of **Selinus University of Science and Literature** carrying out a study on “*The influence of local government politics on the performance of school teachers and administrators in Uganda,*” A case study of Bundibugyo district local government” in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of **Doctor of Philosophy in Education Management and Administration**. The information you will provide will be treated with a lot of confidentiality as this is intended only for academic purposes. Nothing else beyond that.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

7. (a) What is name?

.....

(b) Where do you teach / work?

(c) What is your designation?

8. Where do you lie in the following age ranges?

f. 20-27 years ☐

g. 28-36years ☐

h. 37-45years ☐

i. 46-55 years ☐

j. 55 years and above ☐

9. Your gender?

c. Male ☐

d. Female ☐

10. What is your Level of Education?

f. Master's Degree ☐

g. Bachelor's Degree ☐

h. Diploma ☐

i. Certificate ☐

j. If you have any other, please specify.....

11. How many years have you spent in your Current School?

- a. 1 – 2
- b. 3 – 4
- c. 5 – 6
- d. 7 and above

12. How many years did you spend in your Previous School?

- a. 1 – 2
- b. 3 – 4
- c. 5 – 6
- d. 7 and above

SECTION B: Teachers' Involvement in Politics.

Dear respondent, you will let me know your position about the statements I am going to make regarding teacher involvement in politics. You will indicate if you:
Strongly Agree, Agree, Are not Sure, Disagree or Strongly Disagree.

7	Teachers Involvement in Politics	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
i.	It is said that some teachers are involved in politicking during the campaign season and even after. What is your take on this?					
ii.	Is it impossible for teachers to remain neutral during political campaigns for political offices?					
iii.	Some people say that our Politicians provide the much-needed support to our schools. What is your take on this?					
iv.	It is believed that Teachers support political aspirants not for the good of their schools but for their survival.					
8	Transfers and Performance	SA	A	NS	D	SD
i.	From your experience, do teachers transfers affect student performance in schools?					

ii.	Teachers should be transferred at any time from one station to another to improve performance.					
iii.	Forced Transfers have a negative effect on teachers', administrators' & students' overall performance.					
iv.	Some politicians such as district leaders, councilors, in Bundibugyo district influence teacher transfers.					
v.	Teachers and headteachers are entirely transferred by District Education Officer without any political influences.					

Finally – *help me know more about teacher transfers in Bundibugyo:*

10. What do you think is the underlying cause for untimely teacher transfers in Bundibugyo district?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your cooperation.