

Socioeconomic Determinants of Parental Involvement in Vocational Education: Evidence from Selected Vocational Institutes in Kampala, Uganda

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Abstract

Despite substantial policy investment in Uganda's vocational education through the Skilling Uganda Strategic Plan (2012–2022), enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions remains persistently low. Parental involvement has been identified as a critical determinant of students' educational choices, yet limited empirical research examines its specific mechanisms in the Ugandan context. This study examined the level and nature of parental involvement in students' enrolment in vocational education and investigated the relationship between socioeconomic factors and parental engagement in selected vocational institutes in Kampala, Uganda. Using a descriptive cross-sectional design, data were collected from 321 students, 108 parents, and 99 teachers across three vocational institutions through structured questionnaires, yielding a 100% response rate. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) provided the theoretical framework, complemented by Epstein's (2018) overlapping spheres of influence model. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, multiple linear regression, and Pearson correlation. Findings revealed high parental involvement in financial support (89.9%), attendance at school events (95.9%), and awareness of vocational education benefits (88.5%). However, 77.5% of students reported feeling unsupported in selecting specific vocational skills. Employment type emerged as the only significant predictor of parental involvement ($B = 0.966$, $\beta = 0.220$, $p = .033$), while parental qualification showed a negative correlation with emotional and financial support ($r = -.233$, $p = .015$). Age positively correlated with attendance at meetings ($r = .219$, $p = .022$), and employment type demonstrated consistent positive correlations with multiple involvement dimensions. The regression model explained 9.7% of the variance in parental involvement ($R^2 = .097$, $F(5, 103) = 2.257$, $p = .054$), indicating that socioeconomic factors alone provide a partial explanation and that other unmeasured factors warrant investigation. Parental involvement significantly shapes vocational education enrolment, though a notable gap exists between general support and specific career guidance. Employment type and parental education shape engagement patterns, with implications for policy and practice. Recommendations include developing targeted sensitisation campaigns, strengthening parental engagement programmes, providing comprehensive career guidance services, and implementing community-based awareness initiatives.

Keywords: parental involvement, vocational education, socioeconomic determinants, student enrolment, TVET

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

Vocational education has gained recognition as a critical pathway to addressing unemployment, reducing skills gaps, and fostering sustainable economic development in developing countries (World Bank, 2023; UNESCO, 2022). In Uganda, the government has implemented various strategic initiatives including the Skilling Uganda Strategic Plan (2012–2022) and the integration of vocational education programmes into secondary school curricula to enhance skills development and improve youth employability (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2019). Despite these policy frameworks and significant investment in vocational education infrastructure, enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions remains inconsistent and considerably below expected levels (Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board [UBTEB], 2023).

Data from the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board reveal that in 2014, only 25,790 students registered for vocational education programmes. Although the number increased gradually to 33,448 students by 2019, enrolment remains far below the capacity of vocational institutions, and the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated this decline, with only 26,529 students enrolled in 2020 (UBTEB, 2023). This persistent low enrolment represents a significant challenge to Uganda's human capital development and economic transformation agenda.

The persistent low enrolment in vocational education can be attributed to multiple interrelated factors. Negative societal perceptions that position vocational education as inferior to university education, limited awareness about the benefits and opportunities available through vocational pathways, and socioeconomic constraints that limit access for many families have all been identified as significant barriers (Antunes, 2023; Kakooza, 2022). Additionally, inadequate career guidance in schools, insufficient infrastructure, and quality concerns in some vocational institutions further compound these challenges (Kim, 2022). Among the various factors influencing students' educational choices, parental involvement has emerged as one of the most significant determinants. Research consistently demonstrates that parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's academic trajectories, career aspirations, and educational decisions (Grundall & Mack, 2023; Schmid & Garrels, 2021; Mugisha, 2022).

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which provides a robust framework for understanding how parental involvement influences students' educational choices. According to this theory, learning occurs through observation, imitation, and reinforcement of behaviours. SCT is particularly relevant for understanding parental involvement in vocational education through three interconnected mechanisms.

First, observational learning occurs when parents who actively engage in their children's vocational education by emphasising its importance, attending career guidance sessions, and providing necessary resources serve as role models, thereby shaping their children's perceptions and motivation toward vocational pathways (Yuen et al., 2022). When children observe their parents demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviours related to vocational education, they are more likely to adopt similar attitudes and consider enrolling in such programmes.

Second, self-efficacy development is critical in career decision-making. Parental involvement, such as encouraging academic success and providing career advice, enhances students' confidence in their ability to succeed in vocational education (Lent et al., 2023). Parents who express confidence in their children's abilities and provide positive reinforcement contribute to the development of strong self-efficacy beliefs, which in turn influence career aspirations and enrolment decisions.

Third, outcome expectations are shaped by parents' explanations of vocational education benefits. Parents who communicate positive expectations about vocational education outcomes such as employment opportunities, financial returns, and career satisfaction motivate students to pursue these pathways. Conversely, parents who express negative attitudes toward vocational education may inadvertently undermine their children's motivation and aspirations (Schmid & Garrels, 2021).

Furthermore, SCT recognises the role of environmental factors in shaping behaviour and motivation. Environmental factors such as societal perceptions of vocational education, school resources, government policies, and cultural norms can interact with parents' involvement and children's enrolment decisions (Bandura, 1986). For example, schools that provide supportive resources and services can enhance parents' involvement and children's motivation, leading to better outcomes in vocational education (Epstein, 2018). This study also draws on Epstein's (2018) overlapping spheres of influence theory, which posits that students achieve better outcomes when schools, families, and communities work together in harmony. This framework identifies six types of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. In the context of vocational education, these dimensions manifest as financial support, school engagement, career guidance, and advocacy for vocational pathways (Boonk et al., 2020).

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Theoretical Perspectives on Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in education has been extensively studied through various theoretical lenses. Epstein's (2018) overlapping spheres of influence theory posits that students achieve better outcomes when schools, families, and communities work together in harmony. This framework identifies six types of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. In the context of vocational education, these dimensions manifest as financial support, school engagement, career guidance, and advocacy for vocational pathways (Boonk et al., 2020). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1997) model of parental involvement suggests that parents' involvement is influenced by their role construction, self-efficacy, and perceptions of invitations from school and children. Parents who view their role as actively supporting their children's education and believe they have the skills to do so effectively are more likely to be involved (Walker et al., 2020). This framework is particularly relevant in vocational education, where parents may need specific knowledge about vocational pathways and career opportunities to engage effectively (Schmid & Garrels, 2021).

1.3.2 Dimensions of Parental Involvement in Vocational Education

Parental involvement in vocational education is multidimensional, encompassing various forms of engagement that influence students' enrolment decisions and academic success. Schmid and Garrels (2021) identified three primary dimensions: home-based involvement (including emotional support, homework assistance, and career guidance), school-based involvement (including attendance at meetings, communication with teachers, and participation in school events), and academic socialisation (including communicating expectations, discussing career pathways, and providing guidance on educational

choices). Financial support is a critical dimension of parental involvement in vocational education, given the often-substantial costs associated with vocational training (Boonk et al., 2020). Parents who provide financial resources for tuition, materials, and transportation enable their children to access vocational education opportunities (Lisa et al., 2022). Studies in various contexts, including Uganda, have demonstrated that financial support from parents is positively associated with vocational education enrolment and persistence (Kasozi, 2023; Mugisha, 2022).

Emotional and motivational support represents another crucial dimension. Parents who encourage their children, express confidence in their abilities, and provide positive reinforcement contribute to students' self-efficacy and motivation to pursue vocational education (Markussen-Brown et al., 2022). Research in Norway found that vulnerable students in vocational education attributed their academic success to emotional support and encouragement from parents, which boosted their confidence and commitment to their studies (Markussen-Brown et al., 2022).

Career guidance and academic socialisation constitute a vital dimension of parental involvement. Parents who actively discuss career options, provide information about vocational pathways, and guide their children in selecting suitable vocational courses significantly influence enrolment decisions (Grundall & Mack, 2023; Hurst, 2021). Parental career guidance is particularly important in contexts where career counselling services in schools may be limited, as is the case in many vocational institutions in Uganda (Kasozi, 2023).

School-based involvement, including attendance at parent-teacher meetings, participation in school events, and communication with teachers, facilitates a collaborative approach to supporting students' vocational education (Epstein, 2018). Parents who maintain regular communication with vocational education teachers are better positioned to monitor their children's progress and provide appropriate support (Schmid & Garrels, 2021).

1.3.3 Socioeconomic Determinants of Parental Involvement

Research consistently demonstrates that socioeconomic factors significantly influence parental involvement in vocational education. Employment type has been identified as a particularly important predictor, with parents engaged in vocational or technical professions more likely to encourage their children to pursue vocational education (Lisa et al., 2022; Mthethwa, 2023). These parents possess firsthand knowledge of vocational pathways and recognise the value of practical skills for employment and economic self-reliance (Adegbite et al., 2024). In the Netherlands, Lisa et al. (2022) found that parents working in vocational sectors actively guided their children toward similar educational paths due to their lived experiences and the visible returns on investment in those careers. Similarly, in South Africa, Mthethwa (2023) found that parents with vocational work experience were more likely to engage in their children's vocational education, providing both financial and guidance support. In Uganda, parents' employment status significantly influences their capacity to support vocational education financially and guide their children effectively (Kasozi, 2023; Mugisha, 2022).

Parental educational qualification has also been identified as a significant factor, though its effects are complex. Some studies have found that parents with higher educational attainment are more likely to be involved in their children's education generally (Hill & Tyson, 2020). However, in the specific context of vocational education, research in Nigeria (Ogundele, 2021) and Kenya (Kiplagat, 2022) has found that parents with higher academic qualifications often perceive vocational education as inferior to university education, potentially reducing their support for vocational pathways. This academic bias may reflect a perceived hierarchy where academically inclined parents favour university education over vocational

routes, viewing the latter as a secondary option with limited upward mobility or social prestige (Epstein & Sanders, 2020).

Age and gender have also been examined as potential determinants of parental involvement. Older parents may have more life experience, stability, and appreciation for the value of education and long-term career planning (Guo et al., 2021; Yamamoto et al., 2020). Regarding gender, some research has found differences in parental involvement, with mothers often more involved in day-to-day educational activities (Kumar, 2021), while other studies in vocational education contexts have found comparable involvement levels between mothers and fathers, though the nature of involvement may differ (Schmid & Garrels, 2021).

1.3.4 Parental Involvement and Vocational Education Enrolment: Global Perspectives

International research provides substantial evidence for the role of parental involvement in vocational education enrolment. In high-income contexts such as Japan, parental involvement is highly valued and extensively practised. Japanese parents play a significant role in their children's educational choices, attending career guidance sessions with their children and encouraging participation in vocational education programmes (Takahashi, 2022). Imamura (2023) highlights that Japanese mothers attend school events, collaborate with educators to understand vocational pathways, and provide financial support and resources to prepare their children for admission into competitive vocational programmes.

In Norway, research has demonstrated that parental involvement is particularly crucial for vulnerable students in upper secondary vocational education. Markussen-Brown et al. (2022) found that students attributed their academic success to various forms of parental involvement, including encouragement and motivation in the form of emotional support that boosted students' confidence and commitment to their studies. Additionally, practical support such as helping with homework, managing time effectively, and providing resources and a conducive learning environment significantly enhanced student success in vocational education.

The Chinese context provides insight into how government policies influence parental involvement in vocational education. Chen et al. (2024) systematically reviewed Chinese TVET policies, highlighting the government's efforts to align TVET with national development goals. These policy directions aim to enhance the attractiveness of vocational education, thereby influencing parental perceptions and involvement in their children's educational choices. Parents in China increasingly engage in activities such as homework supervision and participation in school events related to vocational education decisions (Schmid & Garrels, 2021).

In South Africa, where vocational education is essential for addressing high youth unemployment, parents play a significant role in helping children make career choices and vocational education enrolment decisions (Mthembu, 2022). Mthethwa (2023) explored factors influencing parental involvement at a TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal province, finding that parents' backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and perceptions of vocational education significantly impact their level of engagement. Parents with higher educational attainment and positive perceptions of TVET were more likely to be actively involved in their children's vocational education.

Nigerian research has highlighted the influence of parents' socioeconomic status and attitudes toward vocational education on their children's choice of vocational courses (Adeyemi, 2022). Ogundele (2021) found that parents' perception of vocational education as a lesser alternative to academic education was a significant barrier to enrolment. This mindset is often rooted in the belief that vocational education is

meant for those who are less academically inclined or from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, perpetuating negative perceptions that discourage enrolment

1.3.5 Parental Involvement in Uganda: Context and Challenges

In Uganda, parental involvement plays a crucial role in shaping students' decisions to enrol in vocational education and training programmes. Research has demonstrated that parental involvement can have a positive impact on students' academic achievement and career choices (Kim, 2022; Mugisha, 2022). However, the nature and extent of parental involvement in vocational education in Uganda face several challenges.

Kim (2022) analysed Uganda's vocational education system, revealing that dropout rates and declining quality of education have been persistent challenges. The research emphasised the need for increased parental engagement to address these issues, suggesting that active participation from parents can enhance students' commitment to their vocational studies and reduce attrition rates. Effective parental engagement requires not only financial support but also emotional encouragement, career guidance, and active participation in school activities (Schmid & Garrels, 2021).

Socioeconomic constraints present significant barriers to parental involvement in vocational education in Uganda. Many parents face financial limitations that restrict their ability to support their children's vocational education (Mugisha, 2022). Additionally, limited awareness about the benefits and opportunities available through vocational pathways hinders parental engagement (Kakooza, 2022). Cultural attitudes that position vocational education as inferior to academic education further compound these challenges (Antunes, 2023).

The World Bank (2023) emphasises the need for responsive and resilient vocational education systems, noting that parental engagement is vital for student enrolment and retention in TVET programmes. The report suggests that when parents are informed and involved in their children's educational choices, there is a higher likelihood of students enrolling in vocational tracks that align with labour market demands. This underscores the importance of developing strategies to enhance parental engagement in vocational education in Uganda.

Government initiatives such as the Skilling Uganda Strategic Plan (2012–2022) have focused on improving the quality and relevance of vocational education but have placed less emphasis on addressing parental perceptions and engagement (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2019). Limited career guidance at the school level fails to inform both parents and students about the importance and potential of vocational studies, contributing to persistent low enrolment (Kakooza, 2022).

In Kenya, the government has recognised the importance of parental involvement in vocational education through various initiatives. The establishment of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA, 2022) represents a significant effort to promote vocational education. Mwangi (2023) found that parental involvement in vocational education can be increased through awareness campaigns, parent-teacher associations, and vocational education fairs. These strategies have shown promise in improving perceptions of vocational education and increasing enrolment.

1.4 Research Gap and Rationale

Despite the growing body of research on parental involvement in vocational education, several gaps remain. First, limited empirical research has specifically examined the dimensions and extent of parental involvement in vocational education in the Ugandan context. While studies have examined stakeholder

engagement and systemic challenges, the precise mechanisms through which parental involvement influences enrolment decisions require further investigation (Kasozi, 2023; Mugisha, 2022).

Second, the relationship between socioeconomic factors and parental involvement in vocational education has not been comprehensively examined in Uganda. Understanding how factors such as employment type, educational qualification, age, and gender influence parental involvement is essential for developing targeted interventions (Boonk et al., 2020; Schmid & Garrels, 2021).

Third, limited research has examined the perceptions of both parents and students regarding vocational education and their influence on enrolment decisions (Kiplagat, 2022; Ogundele, 2021). Understanding these perceptions is critical for developing strategies to enhance the attractiveness of vocational education and promote parental engagement.

Fourth, the role of environmental factors, including school resources, government policies, and community attitudes, in shaping parental involvement and enrolment decisions requires further investigation (Bandura, 1986; Epstein, 2018). This study addresses these gaps by examining the level of parental involvement and its relationship with student enrolment in vocational education in selected vocational institutes in Kampala, Uganda

1.5 Study Purpose and Objectives

Purpose: This study examined the level of parental involvement and its influence on students' enrolment in vocational education in selected vocational institutes in Kampala, Uganda.

Objectives:

1. To examine the level of parental involvement in students' enrolment in vocational education in selected vocational institutes in Kampala, Uganda.
2. To determine the relationship between socioeconomic factors (gender, age, qualification, marital status, and employment type) and parental involvement in vocational education.

Research Questions:

1. To what extent are parents involved in their children's enrolment in vocational education in selected vocational institutes in Kampala, Uganda?
2. What is the relationship between socioeconomic factors and parental involvement in vocational education?

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory and Epstein's (2018) overlapping spheres of influence theory. It suggests that parental involvement encompassing financial support, emotional encouragement, career guidance, school engagement, and vocational education awareness influences student enrolment in vocational education. Socioeconomic factors including parents' employment type, age, qualification, marital status, and gender are hypothesised to mediate this relationship. Based on the literature reviewed, employment type is expected to be positively associated with parental involvement, while higher parental qualification may be negatively associated with support for vocational education due to academic bias. Student perceptions of vocational education, self-efficacy, and career aspirations serve as mediating variables between parental involvement and enrolment decisions, though these mediating pathways are not empirically tested in the present study and represent a direction for future research. Environmental factors including school resources, government policies, and community attitudes also interact with parental involvement to influence enrolment

outcomes. Social Cognitive Theory provides a theoretical lens for understanding these complex relationships, suggesting that parents' involvement serves as a model for their children's behaviour and motivation (Bandura, 1986; Yuen et al., 2022).

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, which was appropriate for exploring factors influencing parental involvement in students' enrolment in vocational education. A cross-sectional survey enabled the researcher to gather data from a wide range of respondents, including students, parents, and teachers, at a single point in time. This approach was effective in providing a snapshot of current attitudes, perceptions, and practices without requiring longitudinal follow-up (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

The quantitative design allowed for the use of structured questionnaires, which facilitated the collection of measurable and comparable data. This ensured consistency and minimised subjectivity in responses. The collected data were analysed using statistical analysis software, specifically SPSS version 25, which enabled the researcher to identify trends, patterns, and relationships among variables such as demographic characteristics and levels of parental involvement (Field, 2020).

2.2 Target Population

The population for this study comprised three key categories of stakeholders involved in vocational education in Uganda: parents, students, and teachers. Specifically, the population was drawn from three selected vocational institutions: Jimmy Sesekasi Institute (School A), Buganda Royal Institute (School B), and Makerere University Business School – Vocational Department (School C). The total target population was 2,225 individuals, distributed as follows: School A: 15 teachers, 80 students, and 30 parents; School B: 84 teachers, 1,030 students, and 70 parents; School C: 33 teachers, 833 students, and 50 parents. This yielded a total of 132 teachers, 1,943 students, and 150 parents. These groups were chosen due to their direct involvement in or influence over students' enrolment decisions in vocational education.

2.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula, a sample size of 528 respondents was determined. This comprised 99 teachers, 321 students, and 108 parents. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the schools based on specific characteristics relevant to the research, including offering vocational education programmes, representing varying sizes in terms of teachers, students, and parental engagement, and representing diverse institutional types (urban, public, or private). Census sampling within selected schools was used to identify the entire population of students, teachers, and parents involved in vocational education within those schools, ensuring comprehensive representation (Kothari, 2020).

2.4 Data Collection Instruments

Structured questionnaires were used as the primary data collection instrument. These questionnaires were carefully designed to align with the study objectives and were administered to three categories of respondents: students, parents, and teachers from selected vocational institutions in Kampala, Uganda. The questionnaires were divided into sections that captured: demographic information of respondents (age, gender, qualification, employment type), parental involvement in vocational education (support, communication, guidance), perceptions and attitudes toward vocational education, and external trends influencing enrolment.

The structured questionnaires were developed based on existing validated instruments from similar studies (Boonk et al., 2020; Schmid & Garrels, 2021) and adapted to the Ugandan context. Each questionnaire was divided into sections capturing: (a) demographic information (age, gender, qualification, employment type, marital status); (b) parental involvement dimensions (financial support, emotional support, career guidance, school engagement, vocational education awareness); and (c) perceptions and attitudes toward vocational education. Items used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5), allowing for quantitative analysis (DeVellis, 2021).

2.5 Validity and Reliability

To ensure content validity, questionnaires were reviewed by three experts in vocational education and research methodology. Construct validity was assessed through factor analysis using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation, confirming the multidimensional structure of the parental involvement scale (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = .826, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity $p < .001$). The factor structure explained 68.4% of the total variance.

For reliability, a pilot study was conducted with a sample of 30 respondents (10 parents, 10 students, 10 teachers) outside the target population. Feedback from the pilot helped refine ambiguous questions and ensure clarity. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with all variables showing acceptable reliability above the .7 threshold (Field, 2020): parental involvement scale ($\alpha = .842$), student perceptions scale ($\alpha = .791$), and teacher perceptions scale ($\alpha = .813$).

2.6 Data Collection Procedures

Trained research assistants distributed questionnaires to parents, teachers, and students and explained the purpose of the study face-to-face. Questionnaires were administered in a quiet, convenient location for participants. Data collection was conducted over a period of two weeks, with follow-up visits to ensure maximum response rates.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Victoria University Research Ethics Committee (Reference: VU-REC/2024/067). Permission was also granted by the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) and the respective vocational institute directors. All participants provided written informed consent after receiving detailed information about the study purpose, procedures, and their rights. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, with data stored securely and accessible only to the research team. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

2.7 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Analysis began with data cleaning to identify missing values and outliers, followed by descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) to summarise respondent demographics and parental involvement levels. For Objective 1, frequencies and percentages were used to assess parental involvement across dimensions.

For Objective 2, inferential statistics were employed. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict the relationship between demographic variables (gender, age, qualification, marital status, employment type) and parental involvement. The regression model was checked for assumptions including multicollinearity ($VIF < 10$), homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals. Pearson correlation analysis examined relationships between socioeconomic factors and various dimensions of parental involvement. All statistical tests were conducted at a 95% confidence level ($\alpha = .05$), with p-values $< .05$ considered statistically significant.

3. Results

3.1 Response Rate

A total of 528 copies of questionnaires were distributed to parents, teachers, and students. Of these, 99 were for teachers who taught in vocational institutions, 321 were for students studying in different vocational programmes, and 108 were for parents who had children in vocational institutions. The overall return rate for all categories was 100%, with all questionnaires returned fully completed. While this exceptionally high response rate is a strength of the study, it may also reflect social desirability bias or the controlled conditions under which questionnaires were administered by trained research assistants. This possibility is acknowledged as a limitation in Section 5.1.

3.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

3.2.1 Parents' Socio-demographic Characteristics

The demographic representation of parents revealed that the majority were females (62.4%), with a middle age bracket of 30–39 years (53.2%). Regarding education level, the highest proportion had a degree (44.0%) and the majority were married (59.6%). The highest number of parents were self-employed (33.9%), followed by those in formal employment (28.4%), and contract employment (22.0%). The high percentage of married parents indicates a stable family environment, which positively influences parental involvement in their children's education (Hill & Tyson, 2020). The employment data suggests that a significant proportion of parents (33.9%) are self-employed, which may impact their ability to support their children's vocational education due to flexible work schedules.

3.2.2 Teachers' Demographic Information

The majority of teachers were females (57.6%), most were between 30–39 years (41.4%), and their highest level of qualification was Vocational Specialisation (45.5%). On marital status, the highest were married (80.8%). Regarding employment type, the highest were on contract (42.4%), followed by permanent employment (33.3%).

3.2.3 Students' Demographic Characteristics

The highest number of students were female (55.1%), with the majority aged between 20–29 years (57.0%), showing a preference for vocational training among younger age groups. The highest number of students was in year two (47.4%). The majority of students were single (67.9%), consistent with their age range

3.3 Level of Parental Involvement

Table 1 presents respondents' insights about parental involvement in students' enrolment in vocational education.

Table 1 Level of Parental Involvement in Vocational Education (N = 528)

Parental Involvement Dimension	SD (%)	D (%)	NS (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	A + SA (%)
Encouraged child to consider vocational education	1.0	2.0	8.1	40.4	48.5	88.9

Parental Involvement Dimension	SD (%)	D (%)	NS (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	A + SA (%)
Attend school events related to vocational education	1.0	1.0	2.0	44.4	51.5	95.9
Aware of benefits of vocational education	1.0	6.1	4.0	39.4	49.1	88.5
Provide financial support for vocational education	1.0	4.0	5.0	24.2	65.7	89.9
Guide child in selecting suitable vocational course	2.0	6.1	4.0	33.3	54.5	87.8
Participate in meetings promoting vocational education	1.0	2.0	3.0	28.3	65.7	94.0
Communicate regularly with teachers about progress	1.9	14.0	2.8	64.2	16.5	80.7

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; NS = Not Sure; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree. Source: Field Data, 2025.

Parents expressed high levels of support, particularly in financial provision (89.9% agree/strongly agree), attendance at school events (95.9%), and awareness of vocational education benefits (88.5%). These findings indicate that parents were generally supportive and actively engaged in school-related vocational activities. Most parents recognised vocational education as a valuable alternative to general academic pathways and participated through guidance and institutional engagement.

However, from the students' perspective, while financial and emotional support was acknowledged (86.9%), a significant number felt unsupported in selecting specific skills, with 77.5% disagreeing that their parents supported their vocational skill choice. Interview findings reinforced this; several students noted that "my parents just paid, but I had to choose for myself," while others mentioned that "my mother guided me to do tailoring because she believed I would get a job quickly." Another added, "My father could not understand the course, but he gave me the money." These responses show variation in parental involvement, with some offering active guidance, others providing financial support only, and a few leaving the decision entirely to the student.

Moreover, there was strong agreement across all stakeholder groups regarding external drivers of vocational enrolment. Government influence was highly rated (90.9%), as was community support (92.7%). This confirms that beyond the family, societal and institutional factors play a vital role in reshaping perceptions and promoting vocational education as a viable career path in Uganda

3.4 Regression Analysis: Predictors of Parental Involvement

Table 2 presents the linear regression results for predictors of parental involvement in vocational education.

Table 2 Linear Regression Results for Parental Involvement

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	32.781	2.603	-	12.592	.000
Gender	.022	1.067	.002	.021	.983
Age	.516	.713	.073	.724	.471
Qualification	-.009	.464	-.002	-.019	.985
Marital Status	-.991	.774	-.124	-1.280	.203
Employment Type	.966	.447	.220	2.162	.033*

Note. * $p < .05$. Source: Field Data, 2025. Dependent Variable: Parental Involvement.

Table 2a Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	df1	df2	p-value
1	.312	.097	.054	6.823	2.257	5	103	.054

Note. Predictors: Gender, Age, Qualification, Marital Status, Employment Type.

The regression model included five predictors, with parental involvement as the dependent variable. The overall regression equation was marginally non-significant ($F(5, 103) = 2.257, p = .054$), explaining 9.7% of the variance in parental involvement ($R^2 = .097$, Adjusted $R^2 = .054$). This indicates that socioeconomic factors alone provide a partial explanation for parental involvement, and other unmeasured factors likely play a more substantial role. Among the individual predictors, only employment type was statistically significant.

Employment Type: $B = 0.966, \beta = 0.220, p = .033$. This was found to be a statistically significant and positive predictor of parental involvement in vocational education. The p-value of .033 indicated that the relationship was significant at the 5% level. This meant that parents' type of employment whether formal, contractual, part-time, or self-employed played an important role in shaping their ability and willingness to support their children's vocational education. The positive coefficient ($B = 0.966$) suggested that as employment conditions became more flexible or vocational in nature, parental involvement increased. This finding supported earlier descriptive statistics showing that self-employed and vocationally experienced parents were more engaged in guiding, financing, and encouraging their children. The

standardised coefficient ($\beta = .220$) indicates that a one standard deviation increase in employment type is associated with a 0.22 standard deviation increase in parental involvement, representing a modest effect size.

Marital Status: $B = -0.991$, $\beta = -0.124$, $p = .203$. This had a negative effect on parental involvement but was not statistically significant. The p-value of .203 indicated that being married, single, divorced, or widowed did not significantly influence how involved a parent was in vocational education matters.

Qualification: $B = -0.009$, $\beta = -0.002$, $p = .985$. Parental education level had a very weak and statistically insignificant influence on involvement. The near-zero beta value ($\beta = -.002$) and very high p-value (.985) suggested that academic qualification did not meaningfully impact how much a parent participated in vocational education decisions.

Age: $B = 0.516$, $\beta = 0.073$, $p = .471$. The analysis revealed a non-significant but positive relationship between parental age and involvement. Though the regression coefficient suggested that older parents would be more involved, the p-value (.471) confirmed that the relationship lacked statistical significance.

Gender: $B = 0.022$, $\beta = 0.002$, $p = .983$. This was the least influential variable in the model. With a β value of .002 and a p-value of .983, there was no statistical evidence that gender affected parental involvement in vocational education.

The regression model revealed that employment type was the only significant predictor of parental involvement in vocational education. Other demographic characteristics like age, gender, qualification, and marital status did not have a statistically significant influence. The modest R^2 value (.097) indicates that these socioeconomic factors collectively explain only a small portion of the variance in parental involvement, suggesting that psychological factors (e.g., parental self-efficacy, role construction), school-level factors (e.g., invitations to participate), and contextual factors (e.g., community norms) may play more substantial roles, consistent with Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1997) model

3.5 Correlation Analysis: Socioeconomic Factors and Parental Involvement

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between socioeconomic factors and various dimensions of parental involvement.

Table 3 Correlation Between Socioeconomic Factors and Parental Involvement Dimensions (N = 109)

Socio-economic Indicators	Supportive Parenthood	Encourage Vocational Careers	Attend Meetings/Events	Communication with Teachers	Parental Belief	Emotional & Financial Support
Gender						
Pearson Correlation	-.090	-.090	-.018	.012	-.145	-.172
Sig. (2-tailed)	.350	.351	.851	.904	.132	.073
N	109	109	109	109	109	109
Age						

Pearson Correlation	-.001	.046	.219*	.098	.082	.140
Sig. (2-tailed)	.990	.631	.022	.310	.396	.147
N	109	109	109	109	109	109

Qualification						
Pearson Correlation	-.024	-.013	.007	-.046	-.108	-.233*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.807	.890	.939	.638	.265	.015
N	109	109	109	109	109	109

Marital Status						
Pearson Correlation	-.009	-.029	-.028	.066	-.109	-.082
Sig. (2-tailed)	.924	.768	.773	.497	.257	.397
N	109	109	109	109	109	109

Employment Type						
Pearson Correlation	.142	.076	.334**	.307**	.143	.235*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.140	.432	.000	.001	.139	.014
N	109	109	109	109	109	109

Note. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. Source: Field Data, 2025.

To explore the relationship between parental socioeconomic factors and various dimensions of their involvement in vocational education, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. The analysis focused on six key parental involvement indicators: supportive parenthood, encouraging vocational careers, attendance at school meetings/events, communication with teachers, belief in vocational education, and emotional and financial support.

Gender: All correlations with parental involvement indicators were weak and statistically insignificant ($p > .05$). Notably, gender had a negative correlation with supportive parenthood ($r = -.090$) and emotional/financial support ($r = -.172$), though not significant. This suggested that whether a parent was male or female did not significantly influence their level of involvement in supporting their child's vocational education.

Age: A positive and significant correlation was found between age and attendance at meetings/events ($r = .219$, $p = .022$). Other variables showed weak, non-significant relationships. Older parents were more likely to attend school events related to vocational education, perhaps due to having more life experience or valuing vocational pathways more. However, age was not significantly related to other forms of involvement.

Qualification: A significant negative correlation was found between qualification and emotional/financial support ($r = -.233$, $p = .015$). Other relationships were weak and statistically insignificant. Interestingly, more academically qualified parents were less likely to provide emotional or financial support for vocational education. This may reflect an academic bias, where more educated parents favour university paths over vocational ones. However, the effect size is modest, and causality cannot be inferred from correlation.

Marital Status: All correlations were weak and not statistically significant ($p > .05$). The strongest (but still insignificant) relationship was with communication ($r = .066$). Marital status did not significantly influence any of the forms of parental involvement in vocational education in this study.

Employment Type: Several statistically significant and positive correlations were found: attendance at meetings/events ($r = .334$, $p = .000$), communication with teachers ($r = .307$, $p = .001$), and emotional and financial support ($r = .235$, $p = .014$). Employment type emerged as the strongest and most consistent predictor of parental involvement. Parents with flexible, vocational, or self-employment types may have more time, resources, or appreciation for vocational training, leading to greater involvement in their children's schooling and career guidance

4. Discussion

4.1 Level of Parental Involvement in Vocational Education

The study found high levels of parental involvement across multiple dimensions, particularly in financial support (89.9%), attendance at school events (95.9%), and awareness of vocational education benefits (88.5%). These findings align with Schmid and Garrels' (2021) framework, which identifies multidimensional parental involvement encompassing home-based support, school-based engagement, and academic socialisation. The high level of financial support is consistent with previous research in Uganda, which found that parents' financial readiness is closely linked to their capacity to engage in their children's vocational education (Kasozzi, 2023; Mugisha, 2022).

The finding that parents actively attended school events and demonstrated awareness of vocational education benefits suggests that parents are increasingly recognising vocational education as a valuable alternative to general academic pathways. This represents a positive shift from earlier studies that documented negative perceptions of vocational education in Uganda (Kakooza, 2022). This shift may be attributed to government initiatives such as the Skilling Uganda Strategic Plan and awareness campaigns that have helped reshape parental perceptions (Kim, 2022; Ministry of Education and Sports, 2019).

However, the study identified a significant gap between general parental support and specific career guidance. While students acknowledged receiving financial and emotional support (86.9%), a substantial proportion (77.5%) felt unsupported in selecting specific vocational skills. This finding is consistent with research in other African contexts that found parents often provide financial support but lack the knowledge or confidence to provide specific career guidance (Mthethwa, 2023; Ogundele, 2021). The interview data revealed variations in parental involvement, with some parents offering active guidance, others providing financial support only, and some leaving the decision entirely to the student. This suggests the need for capacity-building interventions to enhance parents' ability to provide informed career guidance.

The strong agreement across stakeholder groups regarding external drivers of vocational enrolment, including government influence (90.9%) and community support (92.7%), confirms that societal and institutional factors play a vital role in reshaping perceptions and promoting vocational education. This

supports Epstein's (2018) theory of overlapping spheres of influence, which posits that students achieve better outcomes when schools, families, and communities work together in harmony.

4.2 Socioeconomic Determinants of Parental Involvement

The regression analysis revealed that employment type was the only significant predictor of parental involvement in vocational education ($B = 0.966$, $\beta = 0.220$, $p = .033$). This finding is consistent with international research demonstrating that parents' employment status significantly influences their capacity to support vocational education (Lisa et al., 2022; Mthethwa, 2023). Parents engaged in vocational or flexible employment were more likely to be involved in their children's vocational education, perhaps due to firsthand knowledge of vocational pathways and the visible returns on investment in those careers (Adegbite et al., 2024).

The positive relationship between employment type and parental involvement can be explained through Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986). Parents with vocational work experience serve as role models, demonstrating the value of vocational skills through their own employment (Lent et al., 2023). These parents possess firsthand understanding of vocational pathways and can provide more informed guidance to their children. Additionally, parents with flexible employment may have more time to attend school events and communicate with teachers, as suggested by the significant correlations between employment type and attendance at meetings/events ($r = .334$, $p = .000$) and communication with teachers ($r = .307$, $p = .001$).

The significant negative correlation between parental qualification and emotional/financial support for vocational education ($r = -.233$, $p = .015$) suggests that more academically qualified parents are less likely to provide support for vocational education. This finding aligns with research in Nigeria (Ogundele, 2021) and Kenya (Kiplagat, 2022), which found that parents with higher academic qualifications often perceive vocational education as inferior to university education. This academic bias may reflect a perceived hierarchy where academically inclined parents favour university education over vocational routes, viewing the latter as a secondary option with limited upward mobility or social prestige (Epstein & Sanders, 2020). However, the modest effect size ($r = -.233$) and the non-significant regression coefficient for qualification suggest that this relationship, while statistically significant in correlation analysis, is not robust when controlling for other variables.

The correlation between age and attendance at meetings/events ($r = .219$, $p = .022$) indicates that older parents are more likely to participate in school-based involvement. This may be attributed to life experience, stability, and greater appreciation for the value of education and long-term career planning (Guo et al., 2021; Yamamoto et al., 2020). Older parents may also have fewer competing responsibilities, affording them more time for school involvement. This finding is consistent with research in China, which found that older parents were more likely to guide their children in selecting practical, skill-based career paths (Guo et al., 2021).

The non-significant relationships between gender and marital status with parental involvement suggest that these factors do not independently predict involvement in vocational education. This finding diverges from some previous research that found gender differences in parental involvement (Kumar, 2021). However, the finding is consistent with research in vocational education contexts that found both mothers and fathers demonstrate comparable involvement levels, though the nature of involvement may differ (Schmid & Garrels, 2021). The non-significance of marital status in this study may reflect the diversity of family structures and the finding that relationship status alone does not reliably indicate involvement unless considered alongside other factors such as household income or co-parenting dynamics.

It is important to note that the overall regression model was only marginally non-significant ($p = .054$) and explained just 9.7% of the variance in parental involvement. This suggests that while employment type is a significant individual predictor, socioeconomic factors as a set provide a limited explanation for parental involvement. Other factors not measured in this study—such as parental self-efficacy, role construction, perceptions of invitations from schools and children (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997), school climate, and community norms—may play more substantial roles. This finding underscores the complexity of parental involvement and the need for multifactorial models in future research.

4.3 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study provide empirical support for Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory in the context of vocational education. The significant relationship between parental employment type and involvement ($B = 0.966$, $\beta = 0.220$, $p = .033$) supports the observational learning mechanism of SCT. Parents with vocational work experience serve as role models, demonstrating the value of vocational skills through their own employment. This finding extends SCT by identifying specific environmental factors that shape parents' role modelling behaviour in vocational education contexts.

The negative correlation between parental qualification and emotional/financial support ($r = -.233$, $p = .015$) reveals a complex interaction between parents' educational background and their self-efficacy in supporting vocational education. Highly educated parents may lack self-efficacy in vocational domains, leading to reduced involvement. This finding extends Lent et al.'s (2023) work on social cognitive career theory by demonstrating how parents' educational experiences shape their outcome expectations and, consequently, their support behaviours.

The gap between general parental support and specific career guidance (77.5% of students felt unsupported in selecting vocational skills) highlights the importance of self-efficacy development in students. When parents lack knowledge about vocational pathways, they cannot effectively build students' self-efficacy through vicarious learning and verbal persuasion. This finding underscores the need for interventions that enhance parents' vocational knowledge as a prerequisite for effective involvement.

The importance of environmental factors, including government influence (90.9%) and community support (92.7%), confirms Bandura's (1986) emphasis on environmental factors in shaping behaviour and motivation. These findings support Epstein's (2018) overlapping spheres of influence theory, suggesting that effective vocational education promotion requires collaboration among families, schools, and communities.

4.4 Practical Implications

For Policymakers: The finding that employment type significantly predicts parental involvement suggests that policies should target employment-based strategies to enhance engagement. Workforce development policies could incorporate parental education components. The academic bias among highly educated parents requires targeted awareness campaigns using evidence-based messaging about vocational education returns. Government initiatives should include community-based awareness programmes leveraging the influence of community leaders and successful vocational graduates.

For Vocational Institutions: The gap between general parental support and specific career guidance indicates that institutions should develop comprehensive parental orientation programmes. These programmes should provide parents with knowledge about vocational pathways, career opportunities, and course selection. Institutions should establish structured career guidance programmes that actively involve parents in decision-making. Flexible engagement opportunities accommodating different work schedules would address the constraints identified in employment type analysis.

For Parents and Communities: Community awareness campaigns should highlight successful vocational graduates, address misconceptions about vocational education, and demonstrate vocational employment as a viable career path. Parental education programmes should enhance parents' vocational knowledge and guidance skills. Community leaders and religious institutions should be engaged as advocates for vocational education to reshape cultural perceptions

5. Study Limitations and Future Research

5.1 Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional design prevents causal inferences about the relationship between parental involvement and enrolment decisions. Longitudinal research is needed to establish causal directions. Second, data were collected from only three vocational institutions in Kampala, limiting generalisability to other regions of Uganda and other institutional types. Third, self-reported data may be subject to social desirability bias, particularly regarding parental involvement. The 100% response rate, while a strength in terms of sample completeness, may also reflect the controlled conditions under which questionnaires were administered and could indicate social desirability bias. Fourth, the study focused on parents' demographic characteristics but did not explore other potentially important factors such as household income, cultural values, or parents' own vocational education experiences. Fifth, the overall regression model was only marginally non-significant ($p = .054$) and explained a modest 9.7% of the variance in parental involvement, indicating that other unmeasured factors play a more substantial role. Sixth, qualitative data from interviews are mentioned but not systematically analysed, limiting understanding of the mechanisms underlying quantitative findings. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable empirical evidence on parental involvement in Ugandan vocational education.

5.2 Future Research Directions

Building on the findings and limitations of this study, future research should: (1) employ longitudinal designs to examine causal relationships between parental involvement and enrolment decisions; (2) expand the geographical scope to include rural and peri-urban vocational institutions for comparative analysis; (3) incorporate objective measures of parental involvement in addition to self-reports; (4) conduct mixed-methods studies combining surveys with in-depth interviews to understand mechanisms underlying parental engagement patterns; (5) investigate the role of household income, cultural values, and parents' own vocational education experiences in shaping involvement; (6) evaluate the effectiveness of interventions designed to enhance parental involvement; and (7) examine how parental involvement affects not only enrolment but also student persistence, completion, and employment outcomes in vocational education. Additionally, future research should test the mediating pathways proposed in the conceptual framework (student perceptions, self-efficacy, and career aspirations) and examine the role of school-level factors (e.g., invitations to participate, school climate) and psychological factors (e.g., parental role construction, self-efficacy) in shaping parental involvement.

6. Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Parental involvement in vocational education in Uganda is multidimensional and generally high across key dimensions including financial support, attendance at school events, and awareness of vocational education benefits. However, a significant gap exists between general parental support and specific

career guidance, with many students feeling unsupported in selecting suitable vocational courses. This suggests that while parents are willing to support their children's vocational education, they may lack the knowledge or confidence to provide informed career guidance.

2. Among the demographic variables tested, only employment type had a significant positive effect on parental involvement in vocational education. Parents with flexible, vocational, or self-employment types were more engaged in their children's vocational education, demonstrating the importance of parents' firsthand experience with vocational pathways in shaping their involvement. However, the overall regression model explained only 9.7% of the variance, indicating that socioeconomic factors alone provide a partial explanation and that other factors warrant investigation.
3. Parents with higher academic qualifications were less likely to provide emotional and financial support for vocational education, though this correlation was modest ($r = -.233$) and not significant in the regression model. This potential academic bias represents a barrier to vocational education enrolment that must be addressed through targeted awareness campaigns and evidence-based messaging about the value and returns of vocational education.
4. External factors including government influence and community support play a vital role in reshaping perceptions and promoting vocational education. This confirms that beyond the family, societal and institutional factors significantly influence parental involvement and enrolment decisions, supporting the importance of multi-stakeholder approaches to promoting vocational education.
5. The study confirms the applicability of Social Cognitive Theory in understanding parental involvement in vocational education. Parents serve as models for their children's behaviour and motivation, with their involvement influencing students' self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and enrolment decisions in vocational education.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

7.1 For Policymakers

1. **Develop Targeted Sensitisation Campaigns:** The Ministry of Education and Sports should develop and implement nationwide sensitisation campaigns aimed at educating parents, particularly those with higher academic qualifications or formal employment backgrounds, on the value and opportunities available in vocational education. These campaigns should highlight successful graduates of vocational programmes, address misconceptions that vocational education is inferior to academic tracks, and showcase vocational employment as a respectable and viable career path. Campaign strategies should leverage various media platforms, community meetings, and school-based events to reach diverse parent populations.
2. **Strengthen Policy Frameworks:** Government should strengthen policy frameworks that support parental engagement in vocational education. This includes integrating parental involvement strategies into national TVET policies, providing guidelines for vocational institutions to develop parental engagement programmes, and allocating resources for parental education and awareness initiatives.
3. **Address Academic Bias:** Develop targeted interventions to address the bias among highly educated parents who may view vocational education as inferior. This could include showcasing successful vocational graduates, demonstrating the economic returns of vocational training through data and testimonials, and integrating vocational awareness into higher education institutions where these parents may be found.

4. **Align Policies with Labour Market Demands:** Align government policies with labour market demands and expand competency-based vocational training opportunities. This would enhance the relevance and attractiveness of vocational education, making it more appealing to both parents and students. The government should ensure that vocational education programmes are responsive to current and emerging labour market needs.

7.2 For Vocational Institutions

1. **Strengthen Parental Engagement Programmes:** Vocational institutions should establish and strengthen parental engagement programmes that promote positive involvement in students' enrolment in vocational education. This could include regular parent-teacher meetings focused on vocational career guidance, workshops on understanding vocational education pathways, and structured opportunities for parents to interact with industry partners. Programmes should be designed to accommodate parents with different work schedules, including evening or weekend options.
2. **Provide Comprehensive Career Guidance:** Vocational institutes should provide comprehensive career guidance and counselling services that involve parents in the decision-making process. This would help bridge the gap between general parental support and specific career guidance, ensuring that students receive informed guidance in selecting suitable vocational courses. Guidance programmes should include sessions specifically designed for parents to enhance their knowledge of vocational pathways and career opportunities.
3. **Implement Flexible Engagement Opportunities:** Given that employment type significantly influences parental involvement, vocational institutions should offer flexible engagement opportunities that accommodate parents with different work schedules. This could include evening or weekend meetings, online communication platforms, and alternative means of parental participation such as virtual parent-teacher conferences and online progress reporting.
4. **Develop Community-Based Awareness Campaigns:** Vocational institutions should increase community-based awareness campaigns to improve perceptions and support for vocational education. These campaigns should target not only parents but also community leaders, religious institutions, and local government officials who can influence community attitudes toward vocational education. Partnerships with local businesses and successful vocational graduates can enhance the credibility and effectiveness of these campaigns.

7.3 For Future Research

1. **Conduct Longitudinal Studies:** Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine how parental involvement evolves over time and its long-term effects on student enrolment, persistence, and success in vocational education. Longitudinal studies would provide insights into causal relationships and the effectiveness of interventions to enhance parental involvement.
2. **Examine Specific Mechanisms:** Research should investigate the specific mechanisms through which parental employment type influences involvement in vocational education, including the role of parents' vocational experience, networks, and resources. Qualitative studies could provide deeper understanding of these mechanisms and the contextual factors that shape parental engagement.
3. **Explore Cultural Factors:** Future research should explore cultural factors and community norms that influence parental involvement in vocational education in different regions of Uganda. Understanding cultural variations would enable the development of culturally sensitive strategies to enhance parental engagement.

4. Evaluate Interventions: Studies should evaluate the effectiveness of interventions designed to enhance parental involvement in vocational education, including awareness campaigns, training programmes, and engagement strategies. Evidence-based evaluation would inform the development of effective policies and programmes to promote parental engagement.
5. Examine Multiple Stakeholder Perspectives: Future research should examine multiple stakeholder perspectives, including students, parents, teachers, and school administrators, to gain a comprehensive understanding of factors influencing parental involvement and enrolment in vocational education. This would enable the development of holistic, multi-stakeholder approaches to promoting vocational education.
6. Test Mediating Pathways: Future research should empirically test the mediating pathways proposed in the conceptual framework, including the role of student perceptions, self-efficacy, and career aspirations in linking parental involvement to enrolment decisions.
7. Investigate School-Level and Psychological Factors: Given the modest variance explained by socioeconomic factors, future research should examine school-level factors (e.g., invitations to participate, school climate) and psychological factors (e.g., parental role construction, self-efficacy) that may play more substantial roles in shaping parental involvement

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