

**Covid-19 Policies and Formal Education of Primary School
Pupils in Lira City West Division.**

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Abstract

This study was set up to investigate COVID-19 policies and the formal education of primary school pupils in Lira City West Division. The study was guided by four specific study objectives which includes: investigating the influence of COVID-19 lockdown on the behavior of primary school pupils; analyzing the effect of alternative teaching methods on the formal education of primary school pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown; assessing the contribution of other COVID-19 policies on the formal education of primary schools; and examining the challenges faced by pupils during and after the lockdown in Lira City West Division. The study was conducted using a case study research design. A qualitative approach was employed using in-depth interviews (IDIs) and key informant interviews. Data was collected from sixty-five (65) study participants with the use of an interview guide. Data analysis was done using the recursive abstraction method, or thematic. The study found that COVID-19 lockdown posed numerous changes in the behavior of pupils, such as immoral behavior changes, substance abuse, indiscipline among pupils, mental behavioral changes, and others. The study revealed that pupils were unable to ask questions, lack of commitments, limited class interaction and inaccessibility to the study materials. In addition to that, the study found out that COVID-19 policies have led to the introduction of new standard operating procedures, automatic promotion, poor class performance, changes in teaching styles, and incompleteness of the teaching syllabus. Finally, the major challenges encountered by pupils were school dropouts, teenage pregnancies, defilement, especially among girls, stress and depression, forced marriage, a lack of scholastic materials, child abuse, and a lack of counseling services. The study concluded that many of the pupils experienced behavioral change during the lockdown; new policies were introduced in schools, and alternative teaching methods were introduced although they benefited the pupils in private schools more than those in public schools. The study recommends that the government increase funding opportunities for primary education. Counselling should be introduced in schools and teachers should be equipped with counselling techniques. Lastly, the different stakeholders should provide academic support to young girls who got pregnant during the COVID-19 lockdown so that they can resume their academic studies.

Keywords: Covid-19, Policies and Formal Education, Primary School Pupils, Lira City West Division.