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**ASSESSING DIFFERENCES IN SECONDARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE BEFORE AND AFTER THE INTRODUCTION OF
UNIVERSAL SECONDARY EDUCATION IN UGANDA**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTORATE OF
RESEARCH AND GRADUATE TRAINING IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN DEMOGRAPHY OF MAKERERE
UNIVERSITY**

AUGUST 2018

ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to investigate differences in secondary school attendance before and after the introduction of Universal Secondary Education (USE) in Uganda. The study focussed on children of the secondary school going ages of 13 to 18 years as spelt out by the Ministry of Education and Sports. Having introduced the USE program in 2007, the study made this investigation using data of the 2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census (UPHC) conducted five years before the introduction of USE as well as data of the 2014 UPHC seven years after the introduction of USE.

The 2002 and 2014 UPHC comprised of 347,701 and 513,045 children of secondary school going aged 13 to 18 respectively. Differentials in secondary school attendance were investigated by the child's socio-demographic characteristics, household level and external environment factors using a nonlinear multivariate decomposition of the logistic regression. The differences in secondary school attendance were decomposed into a component attributable to variations in the characteristics of children and a component attributable to variations in the effects of predictors before and after the introduction of USE.

In the results, the secondary school attendance in 2002 (25.8%; CI: 25.6-25.9) and 2014 (34.9%; CI: 34.7-35.0) demonstrated a significant gap in school attendance of 9.1%. Variations in effects of predictors between 2002 and 2014 contributed the highest percentage (81.8%) to the secondary school attendance gap ($p < 0.05$). In the detailed decomposition, differences in the effects of predictors were noted in variables namely age, disability status, religion, parental survival, region, residence and source of household livelihood. Differences in characteristics were also noted in the aforementioned variables including sex ($p < 0.05$).

Although findings show that the orphaned, rural-based and disabled child was still less likely to attend secondary school after the introduction of USE, the period after USE should have had a notably higher likelihood of a less privileged child attending secondary school education which has been presented by literature as expensive and for a chosen few. Government should therefore conduct routine monitoring and evaluation of its programs to ensure that services are diligently delivered such that for the case of USE in secondary education, the targeted beneficiary children attend and do not simply purport to attend.