

**EXPLORING THE RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT IN
PROBATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICE-MUKONO DISTRICT**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I affirm that this dissertation is my original work and has not been previously submitted to any university or institution for purposes of attaining any academic award.

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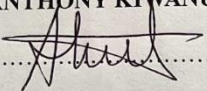
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APPROVAL

I hereby certify that this dissertation is the original and individual work of **AJAH TABITHA JOOL**, registration number **S21B15/083**. It has been done under my supervision and is ready for submission to the board of examiners of School of Social Sciences at Uganda Christian University for the award of the Degree of Bachelors of Social Work and Social Administration.

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Sign.....

19/07/2024

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ABSTRACT

Child neglect is a pervasive issue in Uganda, with far-reaching consequences for the affected children. This study aimed to explore the risk factors associated with child neglect in Mukono District, Uganda, in order to inform strategies for prevention and intervention, focusing on child related, parental, and societal risk factors. A mixed method approach was employed, combining questionnaire responses from 15 participants and in-depth interviews with 5 key informants.

The findings revealed significant risk factors, including child-related factors such as age, gender, and disability, parental factors such as teenage parenting, childhood experiences, and societal factors including neighbourhood crimes, limited social support network and community dynamics. These factors intersect and compound, increasing the likelihood of child neglect.

Despite efforts by the Probation and social welfare office, challenges persist in addressing child neglect. The study highlights the need for comprehensive strategies addressing these risk factors to prevent child neglect and ensure the well-being of vulnerable children in Mukono District and beyond. By understanding the complex interplay of risk factors, stakeholders can develop targeted interventions to support families and prevent child neglect, ultimately promoting the safety of children in Uganda.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

"Exploring the risk factors associated with child neglect in the Mukono district's Probation and Social Welfare Office" was the topic of study. The background information, problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions, scope, rationale, significance, and theoretical framework of the study are included in this chapter.

1.1 BACKGROUND

The tender times of early infancy offer greatest pledges and challenges, they become shaped by their early life experiences. Children grow duly in safer homes with nurturing, reliable and attentive parents or caregivers (Miranda, Arthur, et al., 1998). Those that witness perfecting surroundings view the world safe and a promising place to learn and explore, with grown-ups available and suitable to meet their requirements (Delaney, 1998). These positive tender adventures stimulate a child's physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development thereby adding chances for health, happiness, productivity, and creativity. Still, numerous children don't have these openings of proper growth as a result of maltreatment. And over the centuries, societies have abused and neglected their children through colourful practices similar as ritual offerings, mutilation, abandonment, harsh discipline, exploitation of child labour, killing, exposure to violence and neglect.

When a parent, caregiver, or other responsible party fails to provide a kid with basic necessities including food, shelter, healthcare, education, safety, and supervision, it is referred to as child neglect. It is associated with under-supervision and abandonment (Cates, Markell, and Bettenhausen, 1995, p.1). According to Erickson and Egeland (2002), there are three types of child neglect: medical neglect, which occurs when children are not given access to healthcare or treatment for an illness, supervisory neglect, and physical neglect, which is defined as when needs including food, clothes, and shelter do not get met. This occurs when the adult in charge of the child is unable to maintain the youngster. This happens when the grown-up responsible for the child comes up short to keep the child from hurt, environmental neglect which occurs when the children are left in a smudged environment like leaving decaying food in the child's environment, education neglect came as the fourth neglect and it implies denying the child access to education such as failing to pay or enlist children in school, and finally the emotional neglect which alludes to depriving the child their emotional needs such as dismissing the child,

humiliation the child or failing to show them adore. These diverse forms of neglect have numerous and prolonged results on the advancement of the child socially, cognitively, physically, emotionally and mentally. It has gotten to be the most pervasive of children's rights violations, denying fundamental needs, guidance, secure place, security, and their right to appreciate crucial opportunities. Child neglect might be caused by factors including parenting challenges, addictions, poverty, unemployment, domestic violence, disability, the age of the child and many more, (Stith, 2009; Stalker & McArthur, 2012).

Kobulsky, Dubowitz, et al. (2020) claimed that neglect is an international issue, severity and context among different countries. This suggests that the issue of child neglect is deeply ingrained in the history of many societies, transcending barriers related to age, culture, class, education, and income. According to a meta-analysis, 16% of people globally experience physical neglect, while 18% experience emotional neglect (Stoltenborgh, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Ijzendoorn, 2013).

Cases of child abuse reported including exploitation, trafficking, murder and neglect, etc; neglect led with 1,791 cases comprising 51.6 % males, and 45.3% females and 3.1 others.) with Mukono district having 207 cases of 234,069 cases reported (UCHL: Uganda Child Helpline, ASRCVAC for the year 2017/18).

As a result, in order to fulfil Uganda's constitutional mandate for the welfare of children, the government created the National Child Policy (NCP), which exemplifies its commitment to guaranteeing both the general welfare of children and their protection from abuse (UNCP, 2020). The Policy offers Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) a National Framework for organising and carrying out actions that address children's rights comprehensively. One of the frameworks, Children's Act 2016, Cap 59) offers a comprehensive framework that articulates the constitution's provisions for children and emphasizes their rights, protection, duties, and responsibilities found in African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child plus United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Furthermore, (NCP, 2020, Chpt. 5), highlights five priority areas that informs the objectives, it's strategies and the interventions. Number three which is child care and protection, enlists eight strategies that identify some intervention programs that can be implemented to ensure children are protected from any form of abuse. Child abuse prevention can be addressed through four primary models that include; public awareness campaigns for community education, parent education programs that promoted positivity in parenting, skills-based

curricula to equip children with protective mechanisms, and home visitation programs to offer guidance and support that is individualized (National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, 1998b). The above can also be found in the strategies of child care and child protection (NCP, 2020, Chapter 5.3) and are implemented at different children's welfare systems.

The protection system goal on children, according to Kaboggoza Ssembatya, Assistant Commissioner, Youth and Children Affairs (2016), is to aid prevention and respond to protection risks like abandonment, exploitation (abuse of rights), and neglect. To this end, the system is comprised of various components, including policies, programs, supervision, monitoring, and oversight. He went on to say that there are three levels from which to view the system: the national, district, and neighbourhood levels. The Community Development office, Probation and Social Welfare office, and the Police are in charge of carrying out the aforementioned interventions and programs at the district level. By addressing matters pertaining to children, the Probation and Social Welfare Office in the Mukono district, where I completed my last internship, is essential to the safety of children.

However, during my training cases of neglect being reported seem to not be reducing, indicating that however much the cases are being addressed, the root causes/risk factors of child neglect are not being solved/addresses that is why the numbers keep increasing instead of reducing, thus, making it an essential setting for exploring the risk factors associated with child neglect. These factors refer to measurable characteristics of an individual or the community and society within which they reside that heightens the probability of a worse outcome in the future (Masten & Wright, 1998, p. 9). These risk factors can be child related, parental, and societal.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Child neglect is a multifaceted issue that postures a critical social challenge, influencing the well-being and advancement of children. In spite of the endeavours by the Ugandan government and NGOs, to diminish child neglect cases through execution of different intervention programs pointed at addressing child neglect, the number of cases being reported keep expanding. According to the ANPPCAN Uganda Chapter: CANSA Report 2019, for example, child neglect ranked highest among the violations of children's rights in Uganda last year. Many children, particularly those residing in rural areas, experienced parental desertion, were denied access to food and shelter, and were denied financial support for their education

and medical care. Furthermore, a total of 6,505 cases of child maltreatment were recorded in the Uganda Police Annual Crime Report, 2022, as opposed to 4,961 cases in 2021; this is a 31.1% increase in reported cases. Despite the high number of child neglect instances, empirical study that identifies the precise risk factors linked to child neglect in this area that could identify the underlying cause of child neglect is conspicuously lacking. This suggests that a thorough investigation is required to close this knowledge gap; hence, a multifaceted strategy on the risk factors connected to child neglect is desperately needed to guarantee that the cases are handled from the very beginning.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary purpose of this study was to explore and identify the risk factors associated with child neglect, specifically within the context of Probation and Social Welfare Office, Mukono district. Through a thorough exploration and identification of these risk factors, the officials in the office were in position to address child neglect cases right from the root cause.

1.4.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following are objectives of the study; the main and the specific objectives that guided the study.

1.4.1 Main Objective:

The main objective of the study was to explore the risk factors associated with child neglect in the Probation and Social Welfare Office, Mukono district.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- i. To examine the child related risk factors associated with child neglect in PSWO, Mukono district.
- ii. To assess the parental risk factors associated with child neglect in PSWO, Mukono district.
- iii. To explore the societal risk factors associated with child neglect in PSWO, Mukono district.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What are the child related risk factors associated with child neglect in PSWO, Mukono district?
- ii. What are the parental risk factors associated with child neglect in PSWO, Mukono district?
- iii. What are the societal risk factors associated with child neglect in PSWO, Mukono district?

1.6.0 SCOPE OF STUDY:

1.6.1 Content scope

The study mainly focused on exploring the risk factors associated with child neglect; child related risk factors, parental risk factors, and societal risk factors associated with child neglect in Probation and Social Welfare Office, Mukono district. It specifically focused on finding out the risk factors that are likely the causes of the raise in child neglect cases that are addressed in the Probation and Social Welfare office, Mukono district.

1.6.2 Time scope

The study had no specific period chosen for the literature review, this to ensure thorough examination of the risk factors associated child neglect in PSWO, Mukono district. This research however was carried out for a period of three months that is from April to July 2024.

1.7 JUSTIFICATION:

Child neglect is one of ultimate volatile forms of abuse and, subsequently it has earned less attention than additional forms, given it's not easily identified (Barnett, Chpt. 5, pg149), despite the percentages of child neglect cases and the compelling dangers it poses on the well-being and development of the child, making it necessary to explore the risk factors associated with this phenomenon specifically within the probation and social welfare office in Mukono district. A comprehensive understanding of the risk factors will empower the probation and social welfare officers to recognise and assess families at a greater risk of child neglect accurately, the research will support an insight into the different socio-economic, parental and child related factors that influence child neglect in this specific context. Also, the study will influence the existent knowledge on child neglect therefore instructing the development of evidence-based

practices in the field of child welfare and will serve as a reference for societies facing comparable challenges.

Nevertheless, if the study is not conducted there is a risk of perpetuating the cycle of child neglect, with potential unfortunate consequences for the affected child, families and the society at large. Exposed families may not receive the support they need concerning the issue of child neglect without targeted interventions that are informed through thorough understanding of the risk factors are could be the causes of child neglect. Thus, the omission of this research could result in missed opportunities to break the cycle of neglect and obstruct effective development of preventive measures once, therefore it will contribute valuable judgments to the field of child protection, eventually reinforcing the well-being of children and families within the jurisdiction of the Probation and Social Welfare Office, Mukono district.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Academicians: Students and researchers working on a similar issue of child neglect will use the material that was acquired. The study also contributed to the body of information already known about the risk variables connected to child welfare and neglect, which will be useful in the future.

Local government: The study provided the Mukono District probation and social welfare offices was to be helpful recommendations on how to best reduce and avoid the impacts of child neglect by identifying risk factors linked with it.

Advocates and policy makers: The study gave social workers and other advocates and policy maker's empirical data to help them develop methods for improving children's wellbeing and develop suitable policies.

Secondly, the study also helped to increase the researcher's knowledge and be able to understand different risk factors associated with child neglect and how they can be addressed to prevent child neglect at the grass level.

1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

More research on children and parents needs to be done in order to better understand the risk factors associated with child neglect. By focusing on specific factors, this research can shed light on these risks and help guide prevention, interventions, or efforts. It is believed that a complicated interplay between risk factors inherent in children and their upbringing environment leads to child neglect.

The study adopted the theoretical model of Belsky (1980), that was founded on the ecological context on development of Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2000), the theory assumes that risk factors can be present at four various levels: the ontogenetic development of parents, that refers to the believe that negative parental occurrences from the past inserted their parenting behaviour; further, traits of the child and the family that are consider as the microsystem; thirdly, traits of the environment children live in that is the exosystem; and finally, the attitude of society on children and juvenile neglect that is the macro-system. In this model, the occurrence of child neglect is told by a misbalance between risk factors and protective factors. Protective factors refer to conditions that when present in the families or in the community they increase the health and well-being of children.

1.10 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent variables

Dependent variables

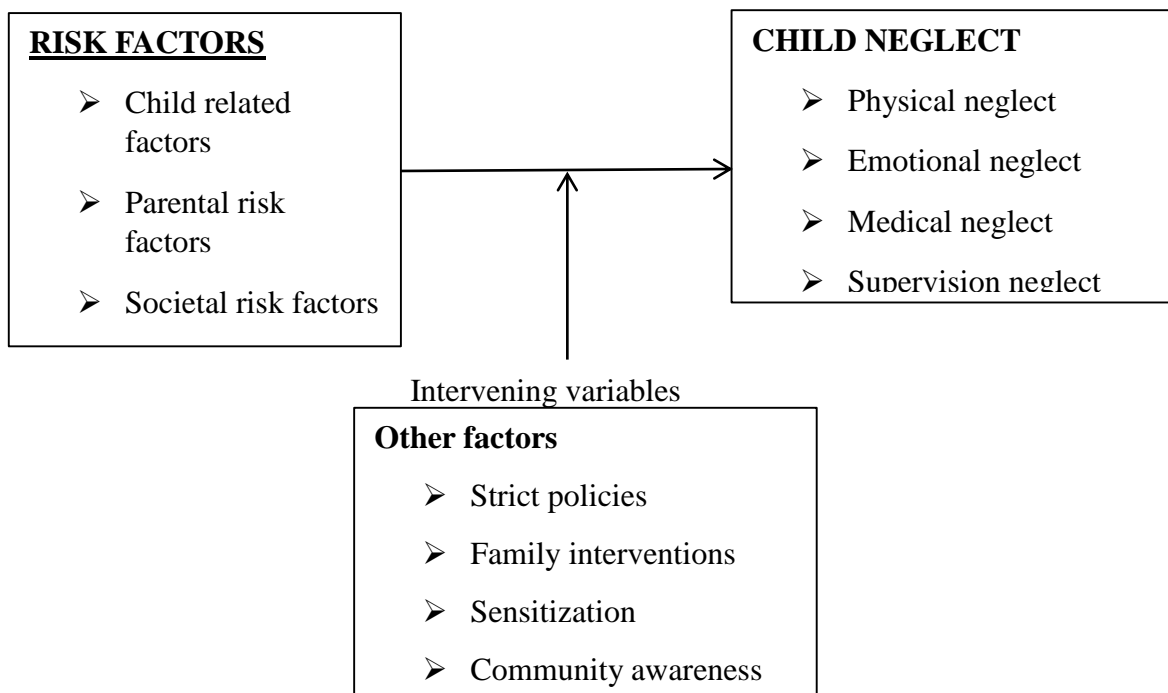


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework above illustrates that risk factors are the independent variable (IV) and child neglect is the dependent variable (DV). It has been demonstrated that risk factors can be further subdivided into child-related risk factors, parental risk factors, and societal risk factors. These factors have a direct impact on the physical, emotional, medical, environmental, and supervision neglect that children experience, as indicated by the arrow pointing to the right. Nevertheless, the probation and social welfare offices can and do take various initiatives to

reduce child neglect in the communities within their context; these constitute the intervening variables in the study. Among these are strict policies, community awareness, family intervention, and sensitization.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION.

Works from other literary works and earlier study on the subject are covered in this chapter. It is critical that comparable studies on the risk factors linked to child neglect in probation and social welfare offices be examined more closely, and that relevant literature be reviewed in order to compare, validate, and identify any disparities. Because of this, the purpose of this chapter is to review and provide insight into the many literatures deemed pertinent to the subject.

2.1 CONCEPTS OF CHILD NEGLECT

According to the National Scientific Council on the Developing kid (2012), on page 2, "the absence of adequate attention, responsiveness, and protection suitable to the age and needs of a child" is what is meant to be understood by the broad term "neglect," which refers to deprivation. Child neglect, as defined by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), occurs when a parent or caregiver is unable to provide for a child's fundamental requirements, which include clothing, food, safety, education, health care, and supervision. Neglect, in contrast to other types of abuse, entails denying a kid the attention they require and taking away their belongings.

Child neglect can appear in many different forms and can result in a variety of both short-term and long-term consequences, and they include physical, emotional, supervisory, medical and educational neglect with several sub-categories for each type (Erickson and Egeland (2002). These long-term or short-term impacts affect the social, physical, emotional, psychological and health aspects of the child's life.

The impact of child neglect on the health and development of children is at least as negative as the impact of other types of child maltreatment (Norman, Byambaa, De, Butchart, Scott, & Vos, 2012). A child that has been neglected might have issues associating with his/her peers because they lack attachment personality which they would have if they had developed it with their parents, meaning they would rather stay isolated than associate with others because they going through this with their parents back at home so they feel it's normal. Similarly, due to their limited emotional regulations, children rely heavily on their caregivers to manage distress,

making them highly sensitive and their caregiver's cues, which in return have influence on their own behaviours and emotional responses (Tronick, 1989), however if their parents are emotionally unavailable, they find it hard to cope with stressing situations which makes them look weak among friends.

In line with several meta-analytical reviews, neglect is not always the focus of practical studies which makes it unclear by virtue of what generally child neglect is in the existent of literatures, with prevalence rates ranging from 1.4 % to 80.1 % (Stephenson R, Sheikhattari P, Assasi N, et al 2006), additionally in National Incidence Studies (NIC-4), that was designed to estimate the extent of child abuse in U.S, recent study included 61% of recognised maltreatment in accordance with NIS harm standard, and 77% of abuse in accordance with the NIS endangered standard (Sedlak et al., 2010).

An online journal posted on 'Leading Ladies Africa' by Oluwaseun Ikusika 2023, pointed out that Africa with highest portion of child neglect in the world with 41.8% of girls and 39.1% of boys. In Uganda, child neglect took lead amidst 1,791 cases (51.6% males, 45.3% and 3.1% unknown) according to UCHL-ANALYSIS-ANNUAL-REPORT-2017/2018. These data show that child neglect has a relatively extreme predominance rate, distinguished to other types of child abuse, for instance physical and sexual abuse.

Even though child neglect has existed consistently proved to be the most commonly proved type of child abuse, research on child neglect is inadequate, particularly studies inspecting risk factors that are associated with neglect (Schumacher, & Heyman, 2001). Studies' recommendations focused on analysing risk factors for child neglect with established studies approved on any participants in few nations.

Risk factors refer to measurable traits of an individual or the society and community within that they reside that heightens the chance of a bad consequence in the future" (Masten & Wright, 1998, p. 9). When these risk factors are linked accompanying limited protective factors the chances or the chance that the child will occurrence child neglect increases and with the order reversed. Protective factors involve attributes or conditions that can happen at individual, family, society or more expansive pertaining to society level. They moderate risk or situation and advance healthy growth and child and family well-being (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2014). Thus, the forms of child neglect and the likely risk factors will be considered in this place chapter but built the existent literature in consideration of elaborate them in details.

2.2 FORMS OF CHILD NEGLECT

Child neglect appears in many different forms, Dubowitz, Pitts, and Black (2004) proposed three subtypes of neglect; physical, psychological, and environmental. Slack, Holl, Altenberned, et al (2003), nevertheless proposed physical, mental health, and cognitive neglect. Emotional, cognitive, supervision, and physical neglect were suggested by Kaufman Kantor et al (2004). Some studies proposed care neglect but still categorised it with supervision neglect and established it under environmental neglect. Erickson and Egeland (2002) recommended 5 types: physical neglect, emotional neglect, medical neglect, mental health neglect, and educational neglect. While there are correspondences between the subtypes, there is still not consensus on which these subtypes endure be. Few have included the subtypes of mental well-being neglect, psychological neglect, and emotional neglect under psychological abuse or emotional abuse (Brassard, Donovan, & Glaser, 2002, Trickett, Mennen, Kim, & Sang, 2009).

Aspects of children's lives such as their cultural, emotional, physical, psychological, and cognitive development are all somewhat impacted by child neglect. These findings include a higher chance of internalising and externalising behaviours, slowed or altered cognitive and emotional development, a lack of long- and short-term personality resilience, substance abuse, sexually risky behaviour, unconventional attachment styles, and severe behaviour (Gilbert et al., 2009; Stoltenborgh et al., 2013). Throughout my internship at the Mukono district municipality's probation and social welfare office, I received reports of several types of neglect, including medical, educational, and physical neglect.

Physical neglect: This form of child neglect refers to the failure of the parent or the caregiver to provide essential fundamental needs such as food, shelter, clothing and supervision. It is ultimate common noticeable form of neglect because it's surely recognised by how the child dresses or the physical look (like either the child is malnourished or not), and the rather a place the child sleeps and stays. Reports of child neglect are often focused on visible signs such as homelessness or hunger, rather than signs of emotional neglect, where a child's emotions are not met, physical neglect is the type of neglect that is finally revealed and given more attention than other types of neglect. For example, a meta-analysis conducted in 2013, established the estimated global incidence of self-reported child physical neglect at 16% (Bakermans-Kranenburg, and Van IJzendoorn, M. H). In line with this, the World Health Organisation's national prevalent study on child abuse in Romanian households revealed that 46% of the

teenagers surveyed reported experiencing physical neglect, which ranked highest among emotional and educational neglect.

Educational neglect: Educational neglect specifies a deficiency in consideration of parents or caregivers to ensure that a child's educational needs are met in accordance with the law, and in accordance with international conventions (Pais, 2011). The child is educationally neglected when the caregiver does not fill needs such as paying tuition expense, buy academic materials or not registering a child that has grown to study particularly when the parent can afford educating a child.

Medical neglect: This refers to when the parent or caregiver forsakes to support unavoidable medical or mental health treatment. It can further be viewed as not having the child's health needs met, regardless of several reasons (Dubowitz H, Bennett S 2007). For instance, a parent does not acknowledge the need for care in spite of important health risks, a parent declines medical tests that are necessary to pinpoint a serious treatable disease or the parent does not determine the treatment that was agreed during the diagnosis.

Emotional neglect: Refers to the failure to meet a child's emotional needs and provide emotional support, or not exactly being emotionally reliable for the child to a degree ignoring them when they cry or they are stressed or show signs of isolation. It can likewise refer to lack of psychological support and love, persistent inattention to the child, caregivers who are psychologically or rationally distant as indicated by failure to notice signs and signals (Dubowitz H, Bennett S 2007).

2.3 CHILD RELATED RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT

The personalities of children who lead to a higher risk of neglect must be identified, as this identifies the most vulnerable youngsters. A variety of research study reviews examined risk factors that were immediately associated with the child, including age, gender, behaviours, and handicap. It's also critical to remember that a child is not accountable for their own maltreatment. The way parents or other caregivers respond to behavioural and disability problems determines whether or not neglect or further abuse occurs.

It is theoretically possible that a child's age influences the probability of neglect because younger children need more on their parents or other primary caregivers to meet their fundamental needs, such as food, clothing, and supervision. Early babies and children were more likely to be ignored, according to Akehurst (2015), who cited two national major case

studies conducted in England in 2001–2003 and 2003–2011. In a similar vein, mainland Chinese reviewers conducted a study examining the relationship between child age and neglect, finding that older children had a higher likelihood of being neglected than younger ones (Liao et al., 2011). In spite of this, children may still depend on their parents or other caregivers, thus this could still be the case.

The examination of the meta-study revealed that female children between the ages of 15 and 17 who reside in fatherless families are at a higher risk of experiencing physical neglect, whereas those who live in two-parent households are at a higher risk of experiencing educational neglect. Still, a limited body of research examining child age as a risk factor for neglect discovered that while it was not associated with neglect per se, it was when it was associated with other variables such as family structure (Schumacher et al. 2001). This implies that a child is more likely to be neglected when their age is associated with another issue, such as a health condition, such as if the child has a chronic illness from a young age.

Furthermore, a child's behaviour may also be a risk factor for neglect since it can affect how much care they require, how stressed-out parents are during parent-child time, and how they feel about their kids. All of these factors increase the likelihood that a child would experience parental neglect along with behavioural issues. According to study findings, child behaviour has been demonstrated to be a risk factor for neglect, albeit this still depends on the specific behaviour displayed. Additionally, it was discovered that children who exhibit more erratic behaviour are extremely vulnerable to neglect (Schumacher et al. 2001). Children who exhibit certain behaviours, such as difficulty paying attention, verbal and physical aggression (insulting behaviour) directed towards the parents, dishonesty, and disobedience, may be more likely to be neglected.

It's possible that children with specific disabilities are more vulnerable to being neglected. This is particularly true for more care-requiring disabilities, like those that increase a child's reliance on physical assistance and reduce their ability to talk. Studies have shown that children with disabilities are 3.8 times more likely to be neglected (Sullivan, P.M., and Knutson, J.F. 2000). Medical neglect, as well as disorders like Down syndrome and hearing problems, are more common in children who need intensive medical care owing to their disability. Conflicting findings have been found in the research on the connection between neglect and disability. This could be explained by the wide range of handicap types and how they affect people's lives. These conflicting results are likely caused by the small scope of the research and the genuine

variation in study methods, especially in the description and assessment of both maltreatment and disability (Jones et al., 2012). Jones et al. (2012) found that children with disabilities i.e., physical, intellectual, or diversified impairments as well as mental illness; to be more likely to suffer from all forms of abuse, including neglect, when compared to their counterparts who were not in capitated. This included medical neglect, inadequate housing, neglect of sanitation, lack of supervision, and/or inactive parenting. The author found that there was a 4.6-fold increased risk of neglect among children with disabilities.

This conclusion was supported by Akehurst (2015), who asserted that children with disabilities may be more vulnerable to neglect because of the extra stress parents face when raising a child with a handicap (such as the increased need for effective, emotional, and financial assistance). Liao et al. (2011) also note that there was a higher likelihood of neglect for kids with disabilities or communication issues. He also emphasized the possibility of a reciprocal association between mild neglect and impairment, meaning that reverse causation between the two cannot be completely ruled out. A child that is disadvantaged may be more likely to be neglected, but neglect itself may also increase the chance that a disadvantage would materialize. This is especially suitable when taking mental disorders into

2.4 PARENTAL RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT.

Several studies have found that a range of parental stresses, such as disengagement, inconsistent early influences, and a lack of parenting expertise, can raise the risk of neglect. These factors may make it more difficult for a parent to identify or meet their child's needs and to build a strong, loving relationship with them, thus it seems that they would also be present in addition to neglect.

Younger teens than older parents are slightly more likely to neglect their children due to their limited life experience and skills, insufficient funds, and mental health problems that impact their ability to make decisions and manage their finances. Stith et al. (2009) discovered that older, less mature parents were linked to a higher likelihood of child neglect, albeit the effect was minor. Similarly, Hindley et al. (2006) found one study that examined the relationship between parent age and repeated child abuse, but the results showed no discernible pattern. It's not that young parents can't take care of their kids; it's just that they might not be able to provide

them the emotional support and guidance they need since they're still too young to fully understand.

Negative childhood experiences are also expected to have an impact on neglect because it is thought that parents who have experienced physical or emotional abuse, neglect, or trauma syndromes as children find it difficult to comprehend positive parenting techniques or to cope with the ongoing effects of these conditions on their children, which in turn affects their ability to parent. Parents who had a tense relationship with their own parents and who were abused as children are more likely to ignore their children, claim Stith et al. (2009). Because it feels normal to them because they went through similar experiences, parents might not even be aware that they are ignoring their children.

It would seem reasonable to assume that parenting behaviours and knowledge would be risk factors for neglect, since inadequate caring practices result in a lack of parenting skills and knowledge. A relatively modest number of studies that looked at parental behaviour were analysed by Schumacher et al. (2001). It was evident that parents who neglect their children interact with them less completely than parents who do not, both verbally and non-verbally, even if the validity of the data was questionable. In addition, Akehurst (2015) noted that parents' unrealistic expectations of their kids, indifference to their physical and emotional needs, and preoccupation with their own needs could be risk factors for neglect and could also be signs of poor emotional health.

Authors predicted that exposure to specific or more general life stressors would raise the likelihood of child maltreatment, in accordance with the meta-analysis review. For example, social isolation implies that parents are ludicrous to have access to informal and practical support when needed; joblessness may result in financial strain and an inability to provide basic necessities for children; and parent stress, emotional regulation, or self-esteem may have an impact on parenting behaviours. Risk factors for child neglect include parental stress (both daily and personal), low self-esteem, influence management (impulsivity and anger/short attention span), unemployment, and a lack of social support (Schumacher et al., 2001; Stith et al., 2009). Parent lack of social support and unemployment had limited belongings on the risk of child neglect. Moreover, two studies were labelled that found decreased social support had a considerable and huge effect on the risk of neglect and two studies associated increased recklessness with raised risk of neglect, although no effect sizes were stated.

Staton-Tindall et al. (2013) report a consistent relationship between higher rates of substantiations, as well as initial and follow-up referrals to child protection agencies for physical abuse and neglect, and caregivers' substance use. Akehurst (2015) also cited two further studies that found a connection between drug usage and inattentive parenting. It was also said that a person may become emotionally detached from their children due to their spouse's drug abuse. With what is known about the addiction cycle, the connection between parental substance usage and neglect makes logical. According to Bromfield et al. (2010), parents who suffer from substance addiction may find it difficult to maintain household routines and tasks due to the symptoms of both intoxication and withdrawal; they may also face financial difficulties or forgo buying necessities in favor of purchasing the substance; and they may experience mood swings that lead to inconsistent parenting behaviors, which may make it difficult for them to care for their children.

2.5 SOCIETAL RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT

At the society level, most child neglect researches have investigated different societal risk factors that are associated with child neglect. Based on two society level risk factors that have been examined in the practical literature are neighbourhood crime and violence and condensed disadvantage. Researchers speculate that such factors increase risk for child abuse by heightening levels of parent and family stress and deteriorating social networks and society organisation. However, authors such as Akehurst, 2015; Coulton et al., 2007; Freisthler et al., 2006; Liao et al., 2011), indicated factors such as poverty, unemployment, social support to be associated with child neglect.

Poverty is most often reported as a significant risk factor for neglect (Austin 2015), poverty refers to a state or condition where one lacks the financial resources and essentials for a particular living standard. A study conducted by McLeigh et al 2018 in US on the correction between neighbourhood poverty and child abuse and neglect, it demonstrated direct effects of poverty rates on child neglect. Due to adverse situations caused by poverty such as frequent lack of adequate provision of basic needs, poverty can be associated with child neglect since child neglect usually occurs when parents or caregivers fail to provide/meet the child's needs which include various elements; lack of safety, not educating the children, lack of school attendance, proper clothing and food, social connection, and healthy hygiene (Guerra, 2001). Given child neglect comes in different forms, child labour is one of the examples of child

neglect under parental neglect, which affects the child's education. Child labour was identified to have correlation with family poverty during a study done in Tanzania, Akarro and Mtweve, (2011). Poverty can in some cases lead to family social isolation and lack of community support, and when socially excluded poor family members can have difficulty noticing the need to build bonds that might help the deal with their situations, and this can lead to negligent behaviour. Additionally, data from different researchers have shown that lack of financial resources and social support increase the likelihood of child neglect, meaning children in poor families are likely to be neglected compared to those in middle class (Lacharite, 2014; Silvany et al., 2011; Mayer et al., 2007).

Additionally, unemployment and low income have adverse consequences for families with children and this can increase the risks of children to experience neglect, this is because parents are having limited resources to provide for child's needs such as adequate food, clothes, pay for medical bills or tuitions, Schumacher et al., 2001. When a parent or a care giver loss a job or earns less, they tend to spend less on needs such as education, clothing and proper medication for the children, which leads to neglect types such as medical neglect and education neglect, Elisabetta De Cao and Dan Brown, 2017).

Lastly, social support can directly impact the relationship between children and parents, (Ergh, Rapport, et al, 2002; Gracia and Musitu, 2003). Parents who are socially isolated are more likely to maltreat their children and are likely to engage in neglect while those that are have strong social bonds are likely to cope with stressors related to child raising and daily demands of parenting. Parents who are emotionally close to their trusted and supportive individuals are likely to meet the basic needs such physical, health, supervision and emotionally needs, and parent well since they have people, they can easily call them for help during unexpected situations, Kathryn Maguire and Xiafei Wang, 2016). However, when parents do not have social support, they may neglect their children given they are socially isolated in their communities.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The methodology of the study was covered in this chapter. The research design, study area, population, sampling processes, sample size and composition, data collection techniques, data processing techniques, data analysis techniques, data quality control, dependability, and ethical issues are what made up the chapter.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is the agreement of the condition for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance of research purposes. This study was a mixed method research design. Involving both quantitative and qualitative research, meaning a qualitative research design was used and which case study research design. While carrying out the research, qualitative research approaches were used since probation and social welfare office is where the study was conducted hence making it a case study. The quantitative research was used to attain statistical inferences toward study findings. The study administered interviews to key informers (probation officers and social workers) because they have the appropriate information about the risk factors associated with child neglect within the context of probation and social welfare office Upper-Kauga, Mukono district. Additionally, in order to get an extensive finding on the topic of study, focus group discussions shall be used with parents of neglected children since they know some of the risk factors they encounter.

3.2 STUDY AREA

The study was carried out in probation and social welfare office in Upper Kauga, Mukono district. Mukono District is neighbored by Kayunga District to the north, Buikwe District to the east, Kalangala District to the south-west, Kira Municipality and Wakiso District to the west, and Luweero District to the north-west. Probation and social welfare office in Mukono district is preferred because it is specifically the office in the regions where prevalent cases of child neglect are reported and it's where the student did her last fieldwork training.

3.3 STUDY POPULATION AND SIZE

Population refers to all people or items with the characteristic one wish to understand in the study, this may be real or obscured (tangible or intangible). A population of 22 will be used in the study when collecting the data, and it constituted the probation officers, social workers and parents of neglected children.

Table 1: Population, sample size and sampling method

Category of respondents	Study Population	Sample size	Sampling method
Probation officers	2	2	Purposive sampling
Social workers	3	3	Purposive sampling
Parents of neglected children	17	15	Simple random sampling
TOTAL	22	20	

Source: Mukono District Local Government, 2024

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION

Slovin's formula will be used in determining the sample size from the 22 population of the selected categories of participants;

Sample size = n

Population = N (22cases)

Error = e (0.05) or Level of confidence 95%

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{22}{1 + 22(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{22}{1 + 22(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{22}{1 + 0.055}$$

$$n = \frac{22}{1.055}$$

n = 20

Hence, above the population sample size is estimated as 20 participants from the total population of 22. A sample of 15 parents of neglected children will be used during the study. The study will also include a sample of 5 key informants where the probation officers will be 2, and social workers within Probation and social welfare office, Upper Kauga, Mukono district will be 3.

3.5 SAMPLING METHOD

The study utilised a combination of purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques to select the participants in the study. The purposive sampling technique of selection was used to choose the probation officer, social welfare officer and social workers in the area. This was because of their wide familiarity about the subject of study and likely that they are the one that deal promptly and first with the cases of child neglect in the areas under the probation and social welfare, Mukono district.

A sample of 15 of parents with neglected children within the outline of probation and social welfare office, Mukono district were picked using simple random sampling because their population size is larger in number. The simple random sampling was used for this type of people because it is fair and more practical.

3.6 SOURCES OF DATA

There was employment of mixed sources of data collection:

Primary source: Basic raw data from interviews and the questionnaires that were used on picked respondents. The collected data was through utilising interview guides and questionnaires which helped the investigator to accumulate information for the specific purposes of the study.

Secondary source: The study involved reviewing secondary data contained in the annual child reports written on the prevailing condition of child neglect in probation and social welfare office. Therefore, these reports were used to analyse the risk factors associated with child neglect in probation and social welfare office, Mukono district.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

The data collection methods and research instruments that were used during the process of data collection included; in-depth interviews and questionnaires.

3.7.1 Key informants Interviews

Interviews were used to accumulate data from probation and social welfare officers and social workers within probation and social welfare office, Mukono district with the use of interview guides. This was broadly due to the experience that these respondents have and the frequent need for stimulation or clarification they need and more widely planning, so that a more extensive understanding will be surely attained later in the findings concerning this study. In this study, in-depth interviewing techniques, including probing, were extensively employed to get a more detailed and insightful information on the risk factors that are associated with child neglect in probation and social welfare office, Mukono district from the respondents with the help of a structured interview guide.

3.7.2 Questionnaires.

To collect data, questionnaires were distributed to parents and caretakers of children who were identified as neglected. This ensured that in-depth clarification following the objectives hence achieving accurate findings from the study. Questionnaires had statements and questions specific to objective and the respondents gave their independent degree of agreement accordingly.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Prior to data collection, an introductory letter from the School of Social Sciences, Social Work and Social Administration department in Uganda Christian University was gotten, and then sought to obtain approval from relevant leaders and permission from various respondents in probation and social welfare office, Mukono district which. Then structured interviews guides and questionnaires administer to respondents.

3.9 QUALITY AND ERROR CONTROL

3.10 VALIDITY OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

To ensure the validity and the reliability of the data instruments, pre-testing, pilot study, post-testing and retesting were conducted which guaranteed the validity of the tools. The validity

assessment helped evaluate the tools' ability to accurately measure intended outcomes, whereas the reliability of the tools was ensured through the consistency in measuring desired variables. The active involvement of the researcher in data collection and its analysis assisted in minimization of errors.

3.11 DATA ANALYSIS

3.11.1 Analysis of quantitative data

Excel files were used for data analysis, as they are not only convenient to use but also suitable for managing the study's regressions and variable equivalencies. Names and codes will be applied to each variable in order to facilitate computer entry. In addition, every response was coded to make computer data input easier. Thirdly, negative utter scales were recorded and given new values following data entry. Fourth, the scale of item scores was obtained through the computation of the variables. Fifth, errors through data entry were minimised by screening of the data.

In addition, through a thematic analysis, the data was examined to uncover the recurring patterns, themes, and classifications. The results highlighted the key themes that emerged in relation to each guide question, with illustrative quotes from the respondents to provide an insightful and depth to the findings.

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Confidentiality of participants was ensured through anonymous questionnaires and interview identification numbers. Data was used solely for this study, with informed consent that were obtained from the respondents. Academic integrity was maintained through proper citations and referencing. Objectivity was ensured by preventing personal bias throughout the research process.

3.13 ANTICIPATED LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Initially, respondents were hesitant to share information due to concerns about how it would be used for, however with the university's remarkable reputation and the possession of the introductory letter plus the acceptance letter helped in alleviation these concerns.

Financial constraints posed a challenge, but support from the family members was secured to cover essential expenses like printing and transportation. Delays in survey returns impacted the research timeline, but the researcher mitigated this by collecting more data than needed,

allowing for gaps to be filled. And to ensure consistency in data collection, it was collected personally rather than relying on assistants, which can introduce variability in timing, and respondents' engagement. Finally, through careful planning and execution, the researcher minimized potential irregularities and efficient data collection.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a section where data collected and analyzed was presented. The study topic was: EXPLORE THE RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT IN PSWO, MUKONO DISTRICT. The statistical findings below come from data collected using questionnaires and interview guides. The data was collected from a total of 20 respondents whereby 15 filled questionnaires and 5 were interviewed face to face. The study's findings were presented in accordance to study objectives, raw data from the questionnaires was edited, interpreted, and analyzed using frequency tallies and tabulations, with results recorded as percentages. Interview data was similarly coded, tabulated, and presented as percentages, ensuring a consistent and systematic approach to data analysis and presentation.

4.1 RESPONSE RATE

The response from the study recorded a 100% rate as indicated in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 showing the Response Rate

Category	Target sample	Percent
MALE	10	50
FEMALE	10	50
TOTAL	20	100

Source: primary data 2024

According to the table above, the response rate was very good as it attained 100% results

4.2 DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

This section includes cross cutting characteristics of all respondents involved in the study for instance, age, marital status and more.

4.2.1 Age of respondents

The study respondents were from varying age groups as indicated in table 4.2.1 below.

Table 4.2 showing age group of respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percent
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18-25 years	6	30
26 – 35 years	4	20
36-45 years	5	25
45 years and above	5	25
Total	20	100

Source: primary data2024

According to findings in the table above, it can be seen that majority of the respondents were in the age group of 18-25 years with 30%, these were followed by those in the age group of 36-45 years and above 45 years with 25% and the minority were between 26-35 years with only 20%.

4.2.2 Marital status of respondents

In this study, participants were from varying marital categories and these are indicated in table 4.2.2 below.

Table 4.3 showing the marital status of respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Single	7	35
Married	5	25
Divorced	5	25
Separated	3	15
Total	20	100

Source: primary data 2024

According to the findings in table 4.3 above, it was revealed that majority of the respondents were single and not married these represented 35%, they were followed by those who were married and divorced representing a total of 25%, and the minority were those who were separated who represented only 15%. This indicates that there is a lot of marital instability in the study area which leads to separation of partners.

4.2.3 Education levels of respondents

Respondents who participated in the study were of different education levels as indicated in table 4.2.3 below.

Table 4.4 showing the education level of respondents

Level	Frequency	Percent
Primary	5	25
Secondary	10	50
Institution/ university level	5	25
Total	36	100

Source: primary data 2024

Given the statistics in the table above, it is evident that the majority of the respondents were of secondary level with a representation of 50%, these were followed by those of primary level with a representation of 25% and those of primary level were also represented by 25%.

4.3 CHILD RELATED RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT IN PSWO, MUKONO DISTRICT

The study sought to investigate the respondents' rankings on the child related risk factors associated with child neglect in PSWO. The statistics in table 4.5 below indicate the findings on this objective. Responses were in form of ticking against statements in regards to the respondent's degree of acceptance.

Table 4.5 showing child related risk factors associated with child neglect in PSWO

Statements	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Children's personalities	2	10	1	5	0		7	35	10	50
Children are not responsible for their own neglect	10	50	5	25	0		3	15	2	10
The age of the children	10	50	5	25	0		5	25	0	
Sex of the children	2	10	2	10	0		8	40	8	40
Chronic disease at an early age	9	45	5	25	0		3	15	3	15

Source: Primary Data 2024

According to table 4.5 above, the study investigated the major the child risk factors associated with child neglect and the findings are as follows.

The findings of the study indicated that children’s personalities were not associated with child neglect in PSWO, this was evident were 50% of the respondents strongly disagreed while 35% disagreed to the same statement. The findings also showed that only 10% of the respondents agreed to the statement.

The findings of the study portrayed that children were not responsible for their own neglect. This was seen were 50% of the respondents strongly agreed and 25% agreed to the statement. The findings further showed that 15% and 10% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Further the findings of the study revealed age of the children was a strong child risk factor in their neglect. This was shown were the majority of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement with a representation of 50% while 25% also agreed.

Age of the children was a strong risk factors in neglect of children as narrated by one of the key informers.

“It is hard to neglect children under one year because they are still so vulnerable and still need parental care. Even society judges you harshly if you commit such a crime. However, if the child is above two years and has also started weaning neglect becomes quite easier”

The findings of the study in addition found out that sex of the children was not a major risk factor of child neglect. This was evident were 40% of the respondents strongly disagreed and another 40% agreeing to the statement.

Finally, it was found out that prevalence of chronic disease at infancy was a major risk factor for child neglect, this was evident whereby 45% of the respondents strongly agreed and 25% agreed to the same statement

4.4 PARENTAL RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT

These findings sought to investigate the respondents’ rankings on the parental risk factors associated with child neglect in PSWO Mukono District. The statistics in table 4.6 below indicate the findings on this objective.

Responses where in form of ticking against statements in regards to the respondent's degree of acceptance.

Table 4.6 showing the parental risk factors associated with child neglect

Statements	S. A		A		N. S		D		SD	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Conflicting childhood experience	1	5	2	10	2	10	5	25	10	50
Lack of parenting knowledge and abilities	7	35	6	30	0	0	4	20	3	15
Younger parents are at a high risk of neglect	10	50	10	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age of the parent	7	35	8	40	0	0	3	15	2	10
Social isolation	3	15	3	15	0	0	5	25	9	45
Lack of social support and un employment	15	75	3	15	0	0	0	0	2	10

Source: Primary Data 2024

According to table 4.6 above. The findings on the parental risk factors associated with child neglect were as follows:

The data revealed that conflicting childhood experience was not a major parental risk factor associated with child neglect. This was evident whereby 50% strongly disagreed to the statement while 25% disagreed.

Study findings according to the study further revealed lack of parenting knowledge and abilities was a great parental risk factor associated with child neglect. This was portrayed were 35% and 30% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively.

The study still revealed that younger parents were at a higher risk of neglecting their children. This was by the study were by 50% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement and the other 50% agreed to the statement.

Parent's especially young mothers that had unwanted pregnancies were highly prone to child neglect as revealed by one of the key informants during the study.

“Girls that became mothers prematurely tend not to love their children as they look at themselves as children as well, they have no knowledge about caring for a baby and find the child a burden to themselves leading to neglect if they are not supported”

The study findings portrayed that the age of the parents was a great risk factor associated with child neglect by their parents. This was witnessed whereby 35% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement while 40% agreed to the same.

Lastly lack of social support and unemployment by the parents was also a major risk factor associated with child neglect. The findings revealed that 75% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement.

The findings also showed that because of unemployment fathers were more at the risk of neglecting their children than their mothers as revealed by a key informant:

“Given the burden of looking after the family which is catalysed by unemployment. Fathers tend to dissent their family and escape reality through alcoholism or eave in search for better opportunities in urban areas where their families never hear from them again.”

4.5 SOCIETAL RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT.

The study sought to investigate the respondents’ rankings on the societal factors associated with child neglect at PSWO Mukono District. The statistics in table 4.6 below indicate the findings on this objective.

Responses where in form of ticking against statements in regards to the respondent’s degree of acceptance.

Table 4.6 showing the societal risk factors associated with child neglect

Statements	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Prevalence of poverty	10	50	5	25	0	0	5	25	0	0
High unemployment rates	15	75	5	25	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lack of social support	3	15	2	10	0	0	7	35	8	40
Emotional well being	2	10	2	10	0	0	6	30	10	50

Source: Primary Data 2024

The findings of the study revealed that the prevalence of poverty was a strong societal risk factor associated with child neglect. This was evident whereby 50% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, whereas 25% also agreed to the same.

The findings of the study further revealed that high unemployment rates transformed in grater societal risk factors as parents with the society were unable to take care of their children. This was portrayed during the study whereby 75% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement while the other 25 agreed as well.

The findings of the study also revealed that lack of social support was not a societal risk factor as 40% of the respondents strongly disagreed to the statement while 35% of the respondents disagreed.

Lastly the findings of the study showed that societal emotional wellbeing was not a strong risk factor associated to child neglect.50% of the respondents strongly disagreed to the statement.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive summary and description of the results from the key findings of the study is synthesized here. Additionally, this part delves into the discussions of the findings, drawing conclusions and providing policy recommendations. Furthermore, it will suggest avenues for future research, offering recommendations for further investigations and exploration.

5.1 DISCUSSIONS

5.1.1 Child related risk factors associated with child neglect in PSWO, Mukono district.

Age, gender, behavior, and handicap are risk variables that were immediately associated with the children, according to the study's findings. Noting that a child is not accountable for their own mistreatment was also crucial. The way parents or other caregivers respond to characteristics such as behavior and handicap determines whether neglect or further abuse occurs. (Schumacher et al. 2001).

The results also showed that this was a risk factor for neglect since younger infants were more reliant on their parents or other caregivers to meet their basic requirements (clothing and food), as well as to keep an eye on them and supervise them. This aligns with Akehurst's (2015) study, which showed that infants and young children are more vulnerable to neglect, highlighting the critical role of caregivers in ensuring their safety and well-being.

Findings also showed no link between a child's behavior was contributing factor to neglect because parents have no control over their children's care needs, parenting stress levels, or attitudes toward them, all of which can increase the likelihood that their children will experience behavioral difficulties along with parental neglect. It was clear that the vast majority of responders strongly disagreed to the statement

5.1.2 Parental risk factors associated with child neglect

The study's findings demonstrated that younger parents—that is, teenagers—would be more likely than older parents to neglect their children due to their inexperience and lack of life skills, instability in their finances, and mental health problems that impact their ability to make decisions and manage their lives. This was in line with studies by Stith et al. (2009),

which discovered that older, less experienced parents were at risk for child neglect, even though the effect was marginal.

The study's conclusions showed that parents who had a difficult childhood would be more likely to neglect their children. It is assumed that parents who have experienced physical or emotional abuse, neglect, or other negative childhood experiences will not be able to learn positive parenting techniques, or they will continue to experience trauma syndromes or attachment difficulties, which will eventually affect their ability to parent. The study disproved this claim, with half of the respondents disagreeing.

5.1.3 Societal risk factors associated with child neglect.

The study's findings demonstrated how the neighborhood's high crime rate increases the likelihood of child abuse by stressing out parents and families and weakening social networks and societal norms. This outcome was in line with studies conducted by Liao et al. (2011), Coulton et al. (2007), and Freisthler et al. (2006). The study's conclusions, which matched those of Austin (2015), showed that the most common significant risk factor for neglect was poverty. A person was considered as being in poverty if they had no means of subsistence.

The study found a direct correlation between social support and the interaction between parents and children. This was in line with the research by (Gracia and Musitu, 2003; Ehrig, Rapport, et al., 2002). Socially isolated parents were more likely to abuse their kids and neglect them, whereas parents with strong social ties were more likely to be able to handle the stresses of raising kids and the day-to-day responsibilities of parenting.

5.2 CONCLUSION.

Most central risk variables have the most clinical significance. Targeting central risk factors appears to be a very promising way to lower the overall risk of child neglect because reducing the influence of these factors also reduces the impact of other risk factors. Maltreatment of children was the primary risk factor for child protection services, as it did not share conceptual overlap with other risk factors. Therefore, it can be suggested that when parental risk factors are shown to exist, treatments (such as parental trauma treatment) should start with addressing them. Targeting the most central risk factors should help to reduce risks, and therefore, improve the effectiveness of interventions and prevention of child neglect. This may be especially effective in high-risk samples, as the results showed that relations between risk factors are

overall stronger in a poverty-stricken population. It should be noted that some of the most central risk factors could be static in nature, which makes intervening on these factors particularly complex. Besides information on the clinical importance of specific risk factors, applying network analysis to risk factors for child maltreatment has more potential for clinically useful information on intervention and prevention by the probation and welfare office, Mukono District.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following actions are suggested in response to the psychosocial assistance for vulnerable children who are prone to neglect, based on the findings and conclusions discussed above.

Primarily, the researcher suggests that PSWO should seek funding from donors and government assistance in order to fulfill their mandate of aiding neglected and vulnerable children by meeting their basic needs, which include food, shelter, and education.

Second, the researcher suggests that the Mukono community and the group make investments in income-generating ventures that will enable them to make enough money to sustain their offspring and families. Among the revenue-generating pursuits they can partake in agriculture.

Finally, the researcher recommends that the management of PSWO should invest heavily in monitoring and evaluation of children programs. This will help in checking any loopholes and risks that are likely to hinder the success of this program in alleviating child neglect. More to this, external auditors can be employed to ensure that they audit the activities of the project team.

5.4 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study offers a number of recommendations for more research on topics that came up during the investigation and need more investigation. First off, the study's scope was strictly restricted to PSWO. It's possible that not all other organizations in the nation are actively preventing child neglect. Therefore, in order to allow for a comparison of the study's findings, the report suggests that additional research be carried out in other organizations outside of the Mukono district.

The following are study possibilities that the investigator would like to bring up. Initially, it would be intriguing to examine the networks of families where child neglect recurred vs those

where it did not (are the networks of families experiencing recurrent child neglect more densely connected?). Is risk central to this?

Finally, it would be interesting to investigate how protective variables and risk factors are associated (i.e., are protective factors adversely related to risk factors? Are protective characteristics less closely correlated in households when there is a history of child maltreatment? Third, the degree to which risk factors are associated to one another may differ among various (sub) populations (Are risk factor networks distinct for primary, secondary, or tertiary prevention of child maltreatment?).

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APPENDICES

APPENDICES ONE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER



APPENDICES TWO: ACCEPTANCE LETTER

TELEPHONE: 0414697450

IN ANY CORRESPONDENCE ON
THIS SUBJECT, PLEASE QUOTE

Our Ref: ADM/MKN/220/01

Your Ref:



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

OFFICE OF THE
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
MUKONO DISTRICT
P. O. BOX 110
MUKONO
Email: caomukono@yahoo.com


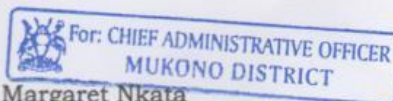
Date: **July 22, 2024**

Ms. Doreen Kukugiza,
Coordinator, Research & Fieldwork Programmes,
Tel: 0773 395349
Uganda Christian University

INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR RESEARCH

This office is in receipt of your letter dated **11th July, 2024**, of the above subject matter.

The purpose of this communication is to grant **Ms. Ajah Tabitha** permission to conduct research in Mukono District with a topic; ***“Exploring the Risk Factors Associated with Child Neglect in Probation and Social Welfare, Mukono District.”***

Tekisooka Margaret Nkata
**For. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
MUKONO DISTRICT**

Copies to:-

- *The District Chairperson, Mukono*
- *The Resident District Commissioner, Mukono*

Mission:

To provide coordinated services for poverty reduction and attainment of sustainable economic development to the community by focusing on the National Policies and local priorities.

APPENDIX THREE: QUESTIONNAIRE

I'm **TABITHA JOOL** a third-year student pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and Social Administration at Uganda Christian University. This questionnaire is designed to **EXPLORE THE RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT IN PSWO, MUKONO DISTRICT.**

I appreciate your participation in this study, be assured that your responses will be completely anonymous and therefore any information you provide in here will be treated with strict confidentiality.

INSTRUCTION

Tick appropriately in the boxes provided. The information that will be given will be used for academic purposes only. Please do not write your name.

PART A

BIO - DATA

1. Age

- (a) 18-25 (b) 26-35
(c) 36-45 (d) 45 and above

2. Marital status

- (a) Single (b) Married
(c) Divorced (d) Separated

Others specify.....

+3. Level of education

1. Primary
2. Secondary
(c) Institution/
University level

If others specify.....

PART B

CHILD RELATED RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT IN PSWO, MUKONO DISTRICT.

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
1.	Children's' personalities					
2.	Children are not responsible for their own neglect					
3.	The age of the children					
4.	The sex of the children					
5.	Chronic disease at an early age					
6.	The extent of parenting stress and attitude and care needs					

PART C

PARENTAL RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
1.	Conflicting childhood experience					
2.	Lack of parenting knowledge and abilities					
3.	Younger parents are at a high risk of neglect					
4.	Age of the parent					
5.	Social isolation					
6.	Lack of social support and un employment					

PART D

SOCIETAL RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT.

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
1.	Prevalence of poverty					
2.	High unemployment rates					
3.	Lack of social support					
4.	Emotional well being					

APPENDIX FOUR: INTERVIEW GUIDE

I am AJAH TABITHA JOOL, a third-year student pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and Social Administration at Uganda Christian University.

This guide is designed to **EXPLORE THE RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD NEGLECT IN PSWO, MUKONO DISTRICT**. I very much appreciate your participation in this study, be assured that your responses will be completely anonymous and therefore any information you provide in here will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Greetings sir/madam,

Child Related Risk Factors;

1. In your opinion, would you say some children could be responsible for their own neglect, and what could be some of the common signs or indicators that a child may be at risk of neglect?
2. What are some of the forms of neglect children face or experience in Mukono district, however within your context?
3. Given your profession, can you discuss any specific characteristics or behaviors in children that may increase their vulnerability to child neglect?
4. How do you think factors such as age, gender, or special needs (disability) might contribute to a child's risk of neglect?

Parental Risk Factors;

1. What are some challenges or stressors that parents or caregivers may face that could lead to child neglect?
2. Can you describe any parenting practices, behaviors or how their age may increase the likelihood of child neglect occurring?
3. Do you believe substance abuse or adverse childhood experiences within the family impact the risk of neglect? And if so, elaborate how.
4. Given your role and experience, what are the likely or common parental risk factors that you have encountered or believe exist within neglectful families within your context?

Societal Risk Factors;

1. From your perspective, what roles do neighborhood crimes and violence play in heightening parental stress and deteriorating social networks which may increase the chances of neglect happening?
2. Are there any systemic barriers or gaps in social support services that you believe contribute to the risk of neglect within the society?
3. How do you think poverty or socioeconomic factors contribute to the prevalence of neglect in the community?
4. Studies have shown that unemployment in the community can contribute to the occurrence of child neglect. Does this also apply to this society?

Thank you