

**IMPACT OF FAMILY BREAKDOWN ON THE PREVALENCE OF STREET  
CHILDREN IN MBALE CITY**

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**S22/MUC/BSW/012**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
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**DECLARATION**

I, Chebet Rabecca, solemnly declare that the research report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of bachelors' degree in social work and social administration is the result of my own original work. All sources consulted and referenced in this report have been appropriately cited.


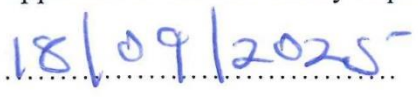
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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research report to my parents for their unwavering love, support, and encouragements have been the driving force behind my academic journey. Their belief in my abilities and constant motivation has been instrumental in helping me overcome challenges and reach this milestone.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AIDs	:	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CSG	:	Child Support Grant
FNS	:	Family and Natural Supports
HIV	:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HVS	:	Hope Village Society
LC1	:	Local Council One
LICO	:	Low Income Cut-Off
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organizations
PTSD	:	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UCU	:	Uganda Christian University

## ABSTRACT

This research report was undertaken to investigate the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city. It was guided by three objectives; to investigate the root causes of family breakdown among the homes of Mbale city, to assess the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city, to find out the possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children in Mbale city. The researcher used a sample size of 45 respondents and used questionnaires and interview guide to collect data and later the data was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Results of the first objective showed that root causes of family breakdown has a significant effect on among the homes of Mbale city. Supported by the following responses; 80% were positive to the statement that financial problems lead to stress, conflicts, and inability to meet basic needs, causing family breakdown ; 66.6% who were also the majority were positive to the statement poor communication results in misunderstandings, unresolved issues, and emotional distance between partners; 62.3% who also constituted the majority were positive to the statement that domestic violence, including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, leads to fear and separation. Results of the second objective revealed that family breakdown has a significant effect on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city. Supported by the following responses; 66.7% of the respondents were positive to the statement that death of parents results in orphaned children lacking care and support, making them vulnerable to street life, 66.6% forming the majority were positive to the statement that parental neglect due to substance abuse, irresponsibility, or abandonment leaves children with no choice but to survive on their own. Results of the third objective showed that possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children have a significant effect in Mbale city. 73.4% forming the majority were positive to the statement that providing free education and vocational training equips street children with skills for a better future and reduces their dependence on street life. There is need for the government to invest in strong family welfare programs and enforce policies that support family unity and well-being. A national family support policy that integrates counseling, mental health services, and conflict resolution strategies should be prioritized. Social protection schemes like cash transfers and housing subsidies should target vulnerable families to reduce economic-related tension.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, specific objectives, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study and conceptual framework.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

According to united nations committee on the rights of the child (2017), street children refers to the individuals under the age of 18 years for whom the street has become their habitual place of residence and who are adequately protected by responsible adults. This definition encompasses children who live entirely on the streets without family support as well as those who work on the streets during the day but return to their families at night. Factors contributing to the presence of street children include poverty, family breakdown, abuse and displacement due to conflicts or natural disasters (Consortium for Street Children 2020).

Consortium for Street Children (2020) intimated that estimating the global number of street children is challenging due to their transient lifestyles and the lack of comprehensive data. However it is widely acknowledged that millions of children worldwide live and work on the streets facing significant risks such as exploitation, violence and health issues. Similarly, National center for homeless education (2020) reports that in the united states, over 1.5 million public school students experienced homelessness during the 2017 -2018 school year highlighting the extensive reach of this issue.

In England, Sheer (2024) articulated that 14% increase in homelessness, with more than 354,000 people including 161,500 children identified as homelessness on any given night. This surge is attributed to factors such as soaring private rents, rising evictions and chronic lack of affordable social housing. Similarly, in Australia, Homelessness Australia (2024) reported that out 95,847 children seeking homelessness support services in the 2022-2023 financial year, 19833 were

turned away due to resource constraints underscoring the systemic challenges addressing child homelessness.

Research indicates that street children often engage in substance use as a coping mechanism. A study by Butwal, Nepal (2024) found that a significant number of street children were involved in glue-sniffing which possess severe health risks and perpetuates their marginalized status (Shrestha & Sinha 2024). Additionally, Jorgensen et al (2024) identified barriers to healthcare access for street and working children including cost, distance, stigma and lack of legal documents further exacerbating their vulnerability and hindering their ability to receive necessary medical attention.

According to peter and Mwangi (2021), there is a significant gap in understanding the long term socio-economic impacts on street children particularly in terms of their reintegration into the society. While much attention has been given to the immediate challenges they face such as access to food, shelter and education, little has been conducted on their post street life especially regarding their transition to adulthood and employment opportunities. Smilary Hassan and Mugisha (2022) highlight that even though various countries have made efforts to address the issue of street children, the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs remains under researched with limited data on how these interventions affect their long-term outcomes.

Chirwa and Nyamwange (2023) intimated that there is little known about the true extent of street children's psychological and emotional challenges such as trauma from abuse and neglect. These factors are crucial for designing effective support systems but much of the existing research focuses mainly on their immediate physical needs. Furthermore, Okoro and Smith (2024) argue that the prevalence of street children is not uniformly measured across different regions and this lack of standard data collection methodologies creates uncertainty in determining the actual number of street children globally. The absence of consistent tools makes it difficult to assess trends over time and identify the most vulnerable subgroups.

Carter and Sharma (2021) postulated that there is limited knowledge regarding the role of government policies in either exacerbating or mitigating the prevalence of street children. While some governments have implemented child protection policies, the impact of these policies remains under explored particularly in non-urban areas. Similarly, Zubairu and Fagbemi (2023) opined that there is insufficient research on how cultural attitudes and societal norms influence the

prevalence of street children in various countries. These social and cultural factors can either encourage or deter children from becoming homeless but their exact impact is not well understood which complicates efforts to develop culturally appropriate solutions.

Williams and walker (2020) alluded that understanding the prevalence of street children is crucial for the development of effective social policies and interventions. Without accurate data on the number of street children, governments and organizations may struggle to allocate appropriate resources for their welfare. The authors argue that accurate data collection is essential for crafting policies that address not only immediate needs such as food and shelter but also long-term concerns like education, healthcare and social reintegration. Similarly, Khan and musinguzi (2021) emphasize that awareness of the prevalence allows for targeted programs that can better address the specific needs of street children, improving their chances of successful transition into society.

In addition to the research on the prevalence of street children is necessary to combat the root causes of child homelessness such as poverty, family dysfunction and lack of access to education (Sutherland & Okello 2023). By identifying trends and patterns in the population of street children, policy makers can better understand the socio-economic factors that contribute to the issue. Mukasa and Bukenya argue that knowing the scope of the problem is essential for preventative measures such as early intervention strategies in schools and communities. Without this knowledge, efforts to prevent children from ending up on the streets may be less effective.

Furthermore, understanding the prevalence of street children is vital for international organizations and NGOs working in child welfare as it helps to poertize resources in areas with the highest need (Barrett & Moyo 2023). Accurate prevalence data allows these organizations to plan and implement projects that target the most affected regions ensuring that assistance reaches those who need it most. According to Ndlovu and Zubairu (2023), understanding the issue on the global scale helps to identify cross border trends and implement international strategies to tackle child homelessness. In doing so, they can create a more coordinated global response to address the challenges street children face.

Johnson and Baker (2020) contends that family breakdown refers to the dissolution of family structures often characterized by divorce, separation, abuse of one or both parents due to various reasons such as economic hardships, domestic violence, or substance abuse. This breakdown often

leads to significant emotional and psychological challenges for children contributing to their vulnerability and potential engagement in risky behaviors including homelessness. Smith and Daniels (2021) stresses that family breakdown as the disintegration of supportive family relationships where children may be subjected to neglect, abuse, or abandonment significantly impacting their development and well-being. Both authors argue that family breakdown is a key factor in pushing children towards living on the streets as these children often lack the necessary support systems to thrive a stable environment.

According to Williams and Johnson (2020), family breakdown is often linked to various socio-economic factors such as financial instability, unemployment and lack of access to resources. These factors contribute to an increase in stress within family units which lead to divorce or separation. Williams and Johnson (2020) noted that the resulting instability affects children's emotional well-being, making them vulnerable to issues like depression, anxiety, and poor academic performance. Similarly, Taylor and Clerke (2021) acknowledges that family breakdown especially in low-income communities frequently leads to displacement of children with many facing neglect. The emotional trauma experienced by children in these situations can have long term effects including likelihood of these children becoming homeless.

In addition to socio-economic factors, family breakdown can also be influenced by domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health issues within the family unit. As noted by Brown and Devis (2022), children living in homes where domestic violence occurs are more likely to experience trauma that disrupts their sense of security and stability. The impact of such an environment can lead to children seeking refuge on the streets as a means of escaping the violence at home. Furthermore, Lewis and Harris (2023) affirmed that substance abuse by parents often plays a significant role in family breakdown leading to neglect and eventual separation of children from their families. The lack of stable home environment makes children more susceptible to becoming street children as they lack the support necessary for a healthy development.

Family breakdown has significant consequences for children's development particularly in terms of their ability to form healthy attachments and relationships in the future. According to Carter and Smith (2024) children from broken families are more likely to struggle with forming secure attachments which can affect their social and emotional development. These children often face difficulties in school and their social interactions which can further isolate them from their peers

and lead to behavioral problems. Similarly, Anderson and Thomas (2023) point out that children from broken families may face stigmatization and exclusion which can contribute to their vulnerability to the streets life. Addressing the root causes of family breakdown is therefore crucial in preventing future generations of children from experiencing homelessness.

Roberts and Miller (2021) asserted that much is known about the socio-economic factors contributing to family breakdown, less is understood about the long term psychological effects of children who experience family disruption. Research on how these children cope up with the emotional scars of family dissolution remains limited. Roberts and Miller (2021) opined that while family breakdown is recognized as a factor in mental health issues such as depression and anxiety more de=tailed research is needed to explore how these issues manifests over a lifetime. Additionally, Thompson and James (2022) suggests that the role of extended family members in mitigating the effects of family breakdown is not well documented. They note that the potential protective influence of grand parents or uncles and unties is often over looked in studies of family dynamics and child well-being.

The intersection of culture and societal factors in family breakdown is not fully explored especially in diverse geographical settings. According to Harris and Ochieng (2023), cultural perceptions of family structure and the stigma associated with family separation can vary widely across regions which may influence how children from broken families are treated or supported. Their research highlights that some cultures, the breakdown of family unit may not have the same negative connotations as in others and children might receive different forms of social and emotional support. Barker and Jobal (2024) pointed out that while much is of the research focuses on the immediate consequences of family breakdown, the long term societal consequences such as the impact on cohesion and community structures have been largely ignored. They argue that understanding these long term effects could provide insights into how family breakdowns influence broader societal trends.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Families in Mbale city would provide stable and supportive environment for children ensuring that their basic needs are met and their emotional and psychological well-being is nurtured. Family cohesion would be strengthened through effective social support systems such as parental guidance programs, community-based initiatives and government policies aimed at preventing family breakdowns. Research has shown that stable family structures are essential for preventing issues such as child neglect and homelessness which are often linked to the prevalence of street children (Mugisha 2021). However, family breakdowns including domestic violence, divorce and economic instability have led to significant challenges in providing proper care and protection for children exacerbating the issue of street children in the city.

Mbale city reveals alarming statistics and consequences related to family breakdown and growing number of street children. According to the latest child protection Audit report by the Uganda child protection network (2023), approximately 25% of children in Mbale city are at risk of homelessness due to family related issues. Factors such as parental neglect, substance abuse and domestic violence have contributed to a rise in children being abandoned leaving them vulnerable to life on the streets. The report further highlights that a majority of these children have experienced trauma which affects their mental health and social integration.

As a result, the prevalence of street children in Mbale city has become a significant social issue with long term consequences for both the children involved and community at large. The lack of stable family structures has also led to increased risks of child exploitation, involvement in criminal activities and poor physical and mental health outcomes for these children. While interventions such as rehabilitation centers, family counseling programs and outreach initiatives have been introduced to address the problem, the situation persists with the number of street children continuing to rise. Despite these efforts, the issue remains largely unsolved highlighting the need for a comprehensive research study to investigate the root causes of family breakdowns and its impact on the prevalence of street children with the focus of developing sustainable solutions.

## **1.3 Research purpose**

To investigate the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city

#### **1.4 Specific objectives**

- i. To investigate the root causes of family breakdown among the homes of Mbale city
- ii. To assess the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city
- iii. To find out the possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children in Mbale city

#### **1.5 Research questions**

- i. What are the root causes of family breakdown among the homes of Mbale city?
- iv. What is the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city?
- ii. What are the possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children in Mbale city?

#### **1.6 Scope of the study**

##### **1.6.1 Geographical location**

The study was carried out from Mbale city which is located in eastern region and it is bordered by several districts including Sironko to the North, Kapchorwa to northeast, and Manafwa to the south.

##### **1.6.2 Time scope**

The period that the study was consider is 4 years that is from (2020-2024), this is because during that period, Mbale city which experiences factors such as parental neglect, substance abuse and domestic violence have contributed to a rise in children being abandoned leaving them vulnerable to life on the streets.

##### **1.6.3 Content scope**

The study was limited to investigating the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city, the study was focused on the key variables relating to family breakdown.

## **1.7 Significance the study**

This study was crucial for policy makers as it may offer valuable insights into the long term consequences of family breakdown on children. The findings may inform the development of targeted policies to address child protection, family support and welfare. By implementing evidence-based strategies, policy makers may create a more effective framework for preventing family disintegration. This may ultimately help reduce the number of vulnerable children in the community.

For stakeholders such as NGOs, child welfare organizations and community leaders, this research may provide critical data to guide interventions. The study's recommendations may support better resource allocation and improve coordination of efforts aimed at protecting at risk children. Stakeholders may gain a clearer understanding of the root causes of child homelessness and better equipped to address these issues directly. This may lead to more effective programs and services for children in need.

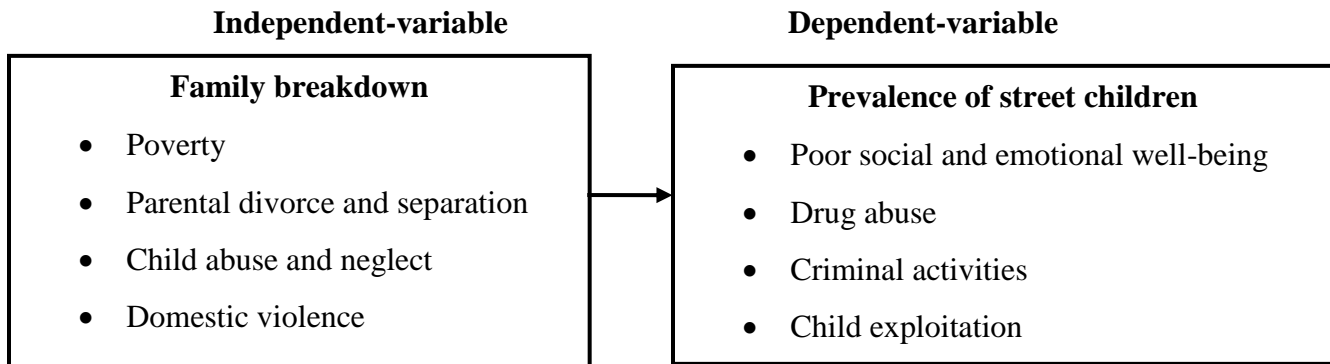
Academicians may benefit from this study by gaining new perspectives on the relationship between family breakdown and children's social development. The research may fill the gaps in existing literature on family dynamics and child welfare. Scholars in social work, sociology, and psychology may find valuable data for future research and theory development. The study may also offer a real world case study for students and researchers to analyze and discuss.

For the government, the study will provide a deeper understanding of the socio economic factors contributing to family breakdown. It may highlight the urgent need for comprehensive national policies to address the root causes of child homelessness. Government programs can be better evaluated and strengthened with evidence from the study. This may ensure more effective allocation of resources to protect vulnerable children and promote family stability.

Officials from Mbale city may find the study essential in shaping local policies and interventions to address the issue of street children. The findings may help local authorities prioritize efforts to strengthen family support system. It may also guide the development of local child protection programs, education initiatives and social services. Ultimately, the study may empower officials to take a proactive approach in addressing the challenges facing children in the city.

## 1.8 Conceptual frame work

**Figure 1: Conceptual frame work**



Source: Researchers conceptualization (2025)

Figure 1 above indicates family breakdown, characterized by poverty, parental divorce and separation, child abuse and neglect, and domestic violence, significantly contributes to the prevalence of street children. Poverty limits access to basic needs, forcing children into the streets to seek food and shelter. Parental divorce and separation often lead to unstable living conditions, lack of supervision, and emotional distress, pushing children to seek alternative support outside the home. Child abuse and neglect create hostile environments that drive children away from their families in search of safety and care. Domestic violence exposes children to trauma and insecurity, compelling them to flee abusive homes. Collectively, these factors weaken family structures, increasing the likelihood of children resorting to street life for survival.

The prevalence of street children, as a dependent variable, manifests in poor social and emotional well-being, drug abuse, criminal activities, and child exploitation. Living on the streets exposes children to harsh conditions, leading to loneliness, depression, and difficulty forming healthy relationships. Many turn to substance abuse as a coping mechanism, worsening their mental and physical health. The lack of guidance and survival pressures often push them into criminal activities such as theft and gang involvement. Additionally, they become highly vulnerable to exploitation, including forced labor, trafficking, and sexual abuse. These outcomes reinforce the cycle of street life, making reintegration into society increasingly difficult.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The general research objective in this study sought to investigate the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city and the literature is reviewed according to the three objectives which include; to investigate the root causes of family breakdown among the homes of Mbale city, to assess the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city, to find out the possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children in Mbale city.

#### **2.1 The root causes of family breakdown among the homes**

Family breakdown in Canada is a mutilated issue influenced by various socio-economic and interpersonal factors. According to Brown and Smith (2021), financial instability particularly among single parent's households significantly contributes to family dissolution. Their research indicates that single –parent families are more susceptible to poverty with 32.2% of single mother households living below the low income Cut-Off (LICO), compared to 8.2% of couple households with children. Similarly, Johnson and Lee (2022) highlight that economic disparities between partners can lead to marital stress often resulting in separation or divorce. They noted that income inequality within a marriage can create power imbalances fostering dissatisfaction and conflict.

Communication breakdowns and infidelity are also significant contributors to family instability in Canada. Williams and Thompson (2023) found that lack of effective communication leads to misunderstandings and resentments which can erode marital bonds over time. Their study emphasizes that couples who do not engage in open and honest dialogue are more likely to experience marital dissatisfaction. In addition, Davis and Martinez (2020) identified infidelity as a critical factor in marital breakdowns. Their research suggests that extramarital affairs break trust and create an irreparable rift between partners often leading to separation or divorce.

Substance abuse and gambling problems further exacerbates family breakdown in Canada. According to the institute of marriage and family in Canada (2020), addiction to substances such as alcohol and drugs can lead to financial ruin and neglect of family responsibilities causing

significant marital issues and divorce. Similarly, the Powel et al (2012) contends that gambling addiction contributes to financial instability and marital discord leading to an increased risk of family breakdown. These studies underscore the importance of addressing addiction issues to promote family stability.

Financial instability significantly contributes to family breakdowns in South Africa. According to Rantho Matlakala and Maluleke (2022), economic challenges have led to father absence disrupting family structures and negatively impacting father-child relationships. Similarly, Budlender and Lund (2011) found that the legacy of apartheid has resulted in high unemployment roles placing immense stress on households and leading to conflicts and marital dissolution. These economic hardships can strain familial relationships increasing the likelihood of breakdowns.

Shifts in cultural norms and societal structures have also played a role in altering family dynamics. According to Zulu et al (2018), the political economy of colonialism and apartheid caused significant damage to the composition and status of the African family leading to weakened family structure. Additionally, the rise of individualism and changing attitudes towards marriage have contributed to the breakdown of traditional family units. These societal shifts can lead to a sense of isolation and reduced familial support contributing to family breakdowns.

Interpersonal issues such as infidelity and communication breakdowns further exacerbate family instability. According to Burnett Attorneys & Notaries (2023), common reasons for divorce in South Africa include differences in priorities additionally, infidelity issues with in-laws financial problems and marital abuse. Similarly, the department of social development (2020) found that persistent communication issues can result in constant conflict and ultimately lead to family breakdowns as unresolved misunderstandings create a harmful atmosphere challenging the stability of relationships.

According to Ameyaw et al (2023), financial hardships including unemployment and economic instability significantly contribute to marital breakdown among young couples in Ghana. The authors found that economic challenges lead to lowered self-esteem and increased stress which strain marital relationships. Similarly, Oyeniyi (2024) discusses how migration often driven by economic necessity reshapes family roles and challenges traditional dynamics in African countries. The physical separation resulting from migration can strengthen economic ties through remittances

but may also strain emotional bonds leading to family instability. According to MacAldo et al (2016), the separatist conflict in Cameroon has led to school closures, displacement and significant disruptions to family life. The violence has forced many families to flee resulting in separation and instability.

According to Uwamariya et al (2020), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and unresolved trauma from 1994 genocide can manifest in marital difficulties contributing to higher divorce rates. The psychological impact of genocide on individuals and couples is essential for understanding the determinants of divorce in Rwanda. Furthermore, Nsabimana (2018) indicates that education can act as a protective factor against divorce providing individuals with better communication and problem solving skills which are crucial in maintain marital stability. According to Kagame and Uwizeye (2018), traditional gender roles and societal expectations can exert pressure on marriages especially when couples fail to conform to these norms. As the country undergoes modernization and urbanization, traditional values may clash with evolving societal expectations contributing to higher divorce rates. Additionally, the Rwandan ministry of gender and family protection (2021) highlights that the patriarchal nature of Rwandan society places expectations on women to fulfill specific roles within the family and deviations from these roles can lead to marital conflicts.

Financial instability significantly contributes to family breakdowns in North America. Haskins and Sawhill (2016) highlight that declining economic prospects among less-skilled men have adversely affected marriage rates as traditional models of marriage based on the male breadwinning become increasingly obsolete. Similarly, a Mark et al (2012) discusses how economy has become hostile to parents with high costs of child care and basic necessities leading to financial stress and debt among families. These economic challenges can strain familial relationships increasing the likelihood breakdowns.

Shifts in cultural norms and societal structures have also played a key role in altering family dynamics. Partel et al (2017) intimated that many adult children are choosing to go no contract with their parents due to complex often painful relational issues including political differences and emotional abuse. This phenomenon known as family estrangement reflects broader societal trends prioritizing individual well-being over traditional familial duties. Furthermore, the rise of individualism and changing attitudes toward marriage have contributed to the breakdown of

traditional family units as noted by Ochieng et al (2021). These societal shifts can lead to a sense of isolation and reduced familial support contributing to family breakdowns.

## **2.2 The impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children**

According to Johnson and Carter (2020), financial instability following family breakdown often forces children into homelessness as single parents struggle to provide adequate shelter and support. Their study emphasizes that a lack of affordable housing and limited access to social services exacerbate the problem pushing children into the streets. Similarly, Martinez and Lewis (2021) argue that in North America, family dissolution frequently results in children experiencing food insecurity and economic hardships leading them to seek survival through informal labor, begging or even criminal activities. The author's stress that systemic economic challenges further worsens the situation.

Roberts and Hill (2022) postulated that children from broken families often experience severe psychological trauma which increases their likelihood of leaving home and becoming street involved. Their research highlights that exposure to domestic violence, neglect and parental conflict can lead to emotional distress making the streets seem like a preferable alternative. Furthermore, Simmons and Walker (2023) found that children from divorced or dysfunctional families in North America suffer from attachment disorders, depression and anxiety which impair their ability to form stable relationships and reintegrate into society. The authors suggest that prolonged exposure to instability at home significantly impacts children's emotional well-being.

Bennett and Cooper (2024) alluded that government and non-government organizations have developed intervention programs in North America aimed at rehabilitating street children through counseling, education, and vocational training. Their study highlights the importance of trauma-informed care and family reunification programs in addressing the issue. Moreover, Dawson and Price (2021) acknowledges that strengthening family support systems and expanding access to mental health services are crucial in preventing children from ending up on the streets. The authors advocate for policy reforms to address the root causes of family breakdown and provide long term solutions to child homelessness. Ahmed and Hassan (2020) denoted that financial instability and parental separation are major contributions of the rise of street children in Egypt. Their study found that children from broken homes often experience economic hardships leading them to seek survival on the streets.

Mansour and Khaled (2022) affirmed that family breakdown leads to psychological distress among the children often manifesting as anxiety, depression and behavioral disorders. Their research highlights that many street children in Egypt have experienced neglect or abuse within their families contributing to their decision to leave home. Additionally, Selim and Omar (2023) noted that children from broken families suffer from low self-esteem and emotional instability making them more susceptible to joining street or engaging in substance abuse as a coping mechanism. The findings show that lack of parental guidance worsens the emotional trauma experienced by these children.

Nabil and Ibrahim (2024) intimated that government and non-governmental organizations in Egypt have implemented various rehabilitation programs aimed at reintegrating street children into society. The study highlights the importance of providing psychological support, vocational training and family reintegration services to address the issue. Furthermore, Fathy and Adel (2021) observed the need for strengthening family support systems and economic empowerment programs to prevent further family breakdowns. The authors suggest that promoting parental education and legal frameworks can help mitigate the rising prevalence of street children.

Olawale and Okafor (2019) denoted that economic hardships and family disintegration are primary contributors to the prevalence of street children in Nigeria. Their study highlights that children from broken homes are more likely to end up on the streets due to lack of financial and emotional support. Similarly, Adeyemi and Olatunji (2021) opined that family violence and economic instability have exacerbated the situation leading to an increase in the number of street children, the authors found that children from disrupted families are at higher risk of becoming street children due to inadequate parental care and support.

According to Eze and Chukwu (2022), children experiencing family violence exhibit increased mental health problems including anxiety and depression. These psychological issues often drive children to seek refuge on the streets. Furthermore, Abraham and Musa (2023) stressed that many street children in Lagos are victims of abuse and abandonment leading to severe psychological trauma. They found that lack of parental care and protection significantly impacts children's mental health pushing them towards street life.

Adebayo and Ogunleye (2024) insinuated that community based programs have been implemented to integrate street children into society by providing shelter, education and psychological support. These initiatives aim to address the root causes of family breakdown and prevent children from resorting to street life. Additionally, Nwosu and Eze (2019) noted the importance of strengthening child protection systems and providing economic support to vulnerable families to reduce the prevalence of street children. The found that comprehensive strategies targeting family stability are crucial in addressing this issue.

Kyaruzi (2022), opined that orphaned children in Tanzania exhibit higher levels of emotional behavioral problems including symptoms of depression and anxiety due to the loss of parental support. These psychological challenges hinder academic performance and social integration, increasing their vulnerability to street life. Furthermore, Ngowi (2014) observed that children from broken families are more susceptible to substance abuse and peer pressure, further execrating their likelihood of becoming street children.

According to the ministry of health, community development, gender, elderly and children (2021), community based support programs have been implemented to strengthen family bonds and provide economic assistance to vulnerable households aiming to reduce the prevalence of street children. These initiatives focus on empowering families through education and financial support. Furthermore, Kasozi and Mbabazi (2024) noted the importance of providing psychosocial support and educational opportunities to reintegrate street children into society highlighting the need for comprehensive approaches to address both the causes and consequences of family breakdown.

Kyaruzi (2022) stressed that Tanzania has approximately 2.6 million orphaned children primarily due to the HIV/AIDs epidemic which has led to increased poverty and the inability of extended families to provide adequate care. This situation often forces children to seek livelihoods on the streets. Ngowi (2014) found that poverty, domestic violence and lack of parental guidance are significant push factors driving children to the streets in Dar es Salaam. The study revealed that over 5000 street children in the region are influenced by these adverse family conditions.

### **2.3 The possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children**

Addressing the challenges faced by street children in North America has been the focus of the numerous studies leading to the development of various mitigation strategies. According Gaetz et al (2018), early intervention is crucial in preventing youth homeless. This approach emphasizes the importance of identifying risk youth before they become homeless. This approach emphasizes the importance of identifying at risk youth before they become homeless and providing support services to address underlying issues such as family conflict, mental health concerns and substance abuse. Similarly, Morton et al (2019) postulated that effectiveness of family and natural supports (FNS) interventions. These interventions aim to strengthen relationships between youth and their families or other supportive adults thereby enhancing stability and reducing the likelihood of homelessness.

Educational institutions play a pivotal role in mitigating challenges faced by street children. According to Ferguson et al (2018), school based early intervention programs are effective in identifying and supporting at risk youth. These programs involve partnerships between schools and community organizations to provide counseling, mentorship and academic support thereby addressing issues that may lead to homelessness. Furthermore, Dworsky and Gitlow (2020) emphasize the importance of educational continuity for homeless youth. They advocate for policies that ensure uninterrupted education which can serve as a stabilizing factor and provide opportunities for future success.

Community-based strategies are also essential in addressing the challenges of street children. According to Slesrick et al (2018), drop-in centers provide critical services such as food, shelter and counseling, offering immediate relief and pathways to more stable living conditions. Additionally, Thompson et al (2020) opined the roles of housing-first initiatives which prioritize providing stable housing without preconditions. This approach has been shown to improve housing stability and reduce the use of emergency services among the homeless youth. Nichols et al (2017) asserts that there is a significant correlation between child welfare involvement and youth homelessness with over 57% of homeless youth reporting prior with child protection services. These statistic underscores the necessity for enhanced support systems within child welfare to prevent the transition into homelessness.

Educational institutions play a pivotal role in mitigating the challenges faced by street children. Smith et al (2022) alluded the implementation of school street interventions in Canadian cities which involve closing streets around schools to vehicular traffic thereby creating safe spaces for children. Their study reveals that such initiatives not only enhance safety but also promote social inclusion and community engagement factors that can deter children from street involvement. Furthermore, the Canadian observatory on homelessness (2018) noted the significance of integrating educational support with housing initiatives noting that stable housing combined with educational opportunities substantially reduces the risk of youth returning to the streets.

Community based interventions are crucial in addressing the needs of street children. The a way home coalition as discussed by Schwan et al (2018) focuses on the community planning and policy development to prevent youth homelessness. Their approach includes engaging various stakeholders from policy makers to service providers to create a cohesive support system. Additionally, MacAldo et al (2016) advocated for housing first initiatives tailored for youth which prioritize providing stable housing without preconditions coupled with supportive services. This model has been effective in promoting long term stability and integration into the community.

Addressing the challenges faced by street children in Egypt has been the subject of extensive research leading to the development of various mitigation strategies. According to Zain Al-Dien (2023) ,the hope village society (HVS) has played a pivotal role in providing education to street children in Egypt. Established in 1995, hope village society educational programs have experienced flustering enrolment rates highlighting the need for consistent support and resources. The study emphasizes the importance o government financial contributions to organizations like hope village society to enhance the capacity to serve street children. Similarly, the state information service (2022) reports on Egypt’s homeless children initiative which aims to incorporate 60% of existing street children into family and social care institutions. This initiative also focuses on developing infrastructure and increasing the capacity of care facilities to accommodate more children.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also been instrumental in mitigating the challenges faced by street children. According to Ochieng et al (2021), the organization has been active in Egypt since 1982 addressing the needs and rights of the most deprived children. Their programs focus on providing education, protection and livelihood support to street children aiming to reintegrate them into society. Furthermore, plan international Egypt (2021) has implemented interventions targeting street children including prevention, outreach transition and reintegration components. These programs aim to address the root causes of child homelessness and provide sustainable solutions for affected children.

According to a study by Slesnick et al (2018), drop in centers play a crucial role in providing immediate support at street children. These centers offer services such as food, shelter and counseling services serving as a bridge to reintegration into society. Additionally, the Borgen et al (2020) alluded the importance of national strategies aimed at protecting and rehabilitating homeless children. The project emphasizes that such strategies should be comprehensive , addressing not only the immediate needs of street children but also focusing on long term solutions like education and vocational training o ensure their successful reintegration into society.

Lefeh et al (2018) denoted that South Africa's national legal framework including the children's Act and children's amendment bill provides mechanisms to address issues faced by street children. However, significant gaps remain such as the absence of a defined social service package for at risk children and limited data on program availability and locations. Similarly, Ngubane and Maharai (2019) opined that while social protection measures like child support grant (CSG) aim to reduce poverty among vulnerable children ,challenges persist in ensuring these benefits reach street children due to their lack of permanent residence and guardianship. According to Malindi and Machenjedge (2012), school engagement plays a crucial role in strengthening resilience among male street children. Their study found that participation in educational programs promoted pro-social behavior, future orientation and provided opportunities for support thereby facilitating reintegration into society. Additionally, Maepa (2015) postulated the efficacy of social skills training programs in addressing psychosocial challenges faced by street children. The study revealed that tailored interventions focusing on self-esteem, resilience and coping strategies significantly improved the well-being of street children in the country.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents research design, area of study, sources of information, population and sampling techniques, variables and indicators, measurement levels, data collection procedures, data collection instruments, quality control, data processing and analysis, ethical considerations,

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study will adopt a descriptive research design to systematically analyze and present findings on the phenomenon under investigation. This design is appropriate as it allows for a detailed examination of the existing conditions, behaviors and experiences of the affected population. By utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study collected firsthand information from the respondent's through surveys, interviews and observations ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The design enabled the researcher to explore patterns, relationships and trends without manipulating variables thereby providing an accurate representation of the current situation. Additionally, descriptive research facilitated the identification of the underlying factors and their effects allowing for informed conclusions and recommendations. The approach was instrumental in gathering data from multiple perspectives ensuring that diverse experiences and insights are captured to enhance the reliability of the findings.

#### **3.2 Area of study**

The research study was carried out from Mbale city which is located in eastern Uganda. It is bordered by severe districts including Budaka, manafwa and Sironko making it a central point for economic and social activities. The city has a diverse population with a mix of urban and peri-urban settlements contributing to its dynamic socio-economic landscape. The area was chosen due to its rapid urbanization which has led to significant demographic shifts, increased economic disparities and social challenges.

### **3.3 Sources of information**

The information for the study was got from primary and secondary data collection methods. Under primary data collection, the information was got directly from the participants and in secondary data collection, the information was got from published materials like books, journals and newspapers.

### **3.4 study population**

The study involved a total population of 51 drawn from various relevant groups to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue under investigation. Local government officials including social workers and child fare officers were 12 participants as they play a crucial role in child protection and welfare programs. Representatives from local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focusing on child-related issues constituted 8 participants given their expertise in intervention programs. 9 Community leaders including religious and cultural figures accounted for individuals due to their influence on family structures and community norms. Parents or guardians who directly experience the effects of family related challenges were represented by 10 individuals, teachers and school counselors who interact with children and observe their behavioral and academic progress will make up 6 participants, former or rehabilitated street children whose firsthand experiences provide valuable insights consisted of 4 individuals , law enforcement officers who enforce protection laws and deal with related legal matters were represented by 2 participants.

### **3.5 Sample size determination**

The study used a sample size of 45 which was selected from the combination of simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Simple random sampling were employed to select 10 government officials to ensure fairness and avoid selection bias. Purposive sampling was applied to select 7 non-government organization (NGOs) representatives as their expertise is crucial for understanding interventions measures. Among the 9 community leaders, 8 were chosen using purposive sampling given their roles in shaping societal values. Out of the 10 parents or guardians, 9 were selected through simple random sampling to ensure diverse perspectives. Teachers and school counselors were represented by 5 individuals selected through purposive sampling based on their direct engagement with affected children. The 4 former street children were included through purposive sampling to capture their lived experiences. 2 law enforcement

officer's were selected through purposive sampling to provide insights into legal enforcement and child protection measures.

The selection of the sample follow the methodology proposed by krejei and Morgan 1970

**Table 1 showing sample size determination**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Sampling procedures</b>
Local government officials	12	10	Simple random sampling
non-governmental organizations (NGOs)	8	7	Purposive sampling
Community leaders	9	8	purposive sampling
Parents	10	9	Simple random sampling
teachers and school counselors	6	5	purposive sampling
former or rehabilitated street children	4	4	purposive sampling
law enforcement officers	2	2	purposive sampling
<b>Total</b>	51	45	

### **Sampling techniques**

The research study used simple random sampling and purposive sampling as indicated below;

#### **Simple random sampling**

Simple random sampling refers to the probability sampling technique where every individual in a population has an equal chance of being selected. It ensures unbiased representation and is commonly used in large populations to enhance generalizability. This comprised of local government officials, parents.

#### **Purposive sampling**

Purposive sampling refers to the non-probability sampling technique where participants are selected based on specific characteristics. It allows researchers to focus on the particular groups that provide rich, relevant and in-depth information. This consisted of non-governmental

organizations (NGOs), Community leaders, teachers and school counselors, former or rehabilitated street children, law enforcement officers.

### **3.5 Variables and indicators**

This consists of independent and dependent variables as below

#### **3.5.1 Independent variables**

Family breakdown as an independent variable significantly influences the prevalence of street children through factors such as parental separation, domestic violence, and parental neglect. When parents separate, children often experience instability, loss of financial and emotional support and sometimes rejection by rejection one or both parents forcing them to seek refuge on the streets. Domestic violence creates an unsafe and toxic home environment pushing children to escape physical and emotional abuse leading them to homelessness. Additionally, parental neglect whether due to substance abuse , mental health issues leaves children feeling abandoned and without guidance increasing their vulnerability to street life.

#### **3.5.2 Dependent variable**

The prevalence of street children as a dependent variable manifests through poor social and emotional well-being, higher school dropout rates and involvement in risky behaviors. Living on the streets exposes children to loneliness, trauma, and lack of emotional support leading to depression, anxiety and low self-esteem. Without stable family support, many street children dropout of school due to financial constraints, lack of parental guidance. This educational disruptions limit their future opportunities reinforcing poverty and homelessness. Additionally, the harsh realities of street life push children into risky behaviors such as substance abuse, crime and exploitation as they struggle to cope with their circumstances and social basic needs.

### **3.6 Measurement levels**

The study utilized four levels of measurement to ensure accurate data collection and analysis. This nominal level categorized responses into distinct groups without any inherent ranking such as gender, occupation or marital status. The ordinal level was used for variables that have a specific order but unequal intervals such as the severity of a given condition or levels of agreement in likert scale responses. The interval measured variables with equal intervals but no true zero point such

as age allowing for measurement comparisons. Participant's opinions was ranked according to the likert scale rating system.

### **3.7 Data collection procedure**

The research supervisor approved the report after which a data collection letter was issued by the head of department of social sciences. This letter was then presented to the local council one (LC1) chairperson of the area to seek permission and support in engaging with the local community. Once authorization is granted at the local level, the process was proceed to Mbale city authorities to request for further approval for accessing the designated locations and interacting with participants. With necessary permissions secured, data collection commenced following ethical guidelines and established research procedures.

### **3.8 Data collection instruments**

The research study will utilize a structured questionnaire, interview guide to collect information.

#### **3.8.1 Interview guide.**

An interview guide was used to facilitate discussions with key informants such as community leaders, social workers and local authorities allowing participants to share their experiences, insights and perceptions. The flexible nature of the interview guide enabled follow-up questions for clarification and deeper exploration of key issues. Through these structured conversations, qualitative data was gathered to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social, economic and cultural dynamics affecting the target population. The information obtained offered valuable context and expert perspectives that may not be easily captured through structured surveys alone.

#### **3.8.2 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was used to collect standardized data from a broader group of respondents ensuring the inclusion of diverse viewpoints. It contained closed ended questions allowing for the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. The questionnaire was administered to individuals such as care givers, affected individuals and other stakeholders to gather measurable information on key trends and patterns. Its structured formal facilitated statistical analysis enabling comparisons across different groups and drawing generalizable conclusions.

### **3.9 validity and reliability of data**

#### **3.9.1 Validity**

Validity ensured that the data collection tools measure what they are intended to assess enhancing the accuracy and relevance of the findings. This was achieved through expert reviews, pre-testing of questionnaires and triangulation of the data sources to confirm consistency. Content validity was assessed by comparing responses from different groups. These measures helped eliminate bias and ensure that the corrected data truly reflects the intended concepts.

#### **3.9.2 Reliability**

Reliability was maintained by ensuring consistency and dependability in data collection procedures and responses over time. A pilot study was conducted to test the stability of the questionnaire and interview guide, identifying any inconsistencies before full scale data collection. The test retest method was applied by administering the said instrument to small group at different times to check for consistency.

### **3.10 Data processing and analysis**

Data analysis is the logical break down of the collected information so that it can be systematically reported. Data analysis depends on whether it is qualitative or quantitative (Creswell, 2009).

#### **3.10.1 Qualitative data analysis**

Qualitative data was analyzed through using thematic analysis where responses from interviews and open-ended questions was categorized into key themes and patterns. This involve transcribing interviews, coding responses and identifying recurring ideas to interpret underlying meanings. NVIVO software or manual coding was used to organize data systematically for better interpretation. Data quotes from participants were included to support findings and enhance credibility.

#### **3.10.2 Quantitative data analysis**

Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical techniques to identify trends, relationships and patterns in numerical responses. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, mean and standard deviation summarized the data while inferential statistics like regression analysis assessed relationships between variables. Data was processed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software version 23.

### **3.11 Ethical considerations**

Before engaging with participants, their voluntary consent was sought to ensure they fully understand the purpose, procedures and potential implications of the study. They were given the option to participate or withdraw at any time without forcing any consequences. This approach guarantees respect for individual's autonomy and promotes transparency in the research process.

Privacy and confidentiality was upheld by protecting participant's personal information. Unique identification codes were used instead of names and data was stored securely to prevent unauthorized access. This measure safeguards the identities of those involved and ensures that sensitive information remains protected.

Respect and sensitivity was maintained throughout the interactions to minimize discomfort. Questions were framed in a manner that is considerate of participant's emotions and their responses were handled with care. If any distress arises, appropriate referrals were made to relevant support services to provide assistance where necessary.

Integrity was a priority ensuring that all data collected is accurate and presented truthfully. Any form of manipulation, exaggeration was strictly avoided. Additionally, potential conflicts of interest were disclosed to maintain objectivity and credibility throughout the research process.

Proper acknowledgement was given to previous scholars whose work contributed to the study. All referenced materials, theories and findings were cited using the appropriate academic format. This practice not only upholds intellectual honesty but also ensures that credit is given to those who have contributed valuable insights to the subject matter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city. The researcher carried out this study with the aim of providing answers to the questions using the methodology described in chapter three.

#### 4.1 Findings on the general information about respondents.

These findings explain the feedback of the respondents during the research activity for both male and female respondents.

##### 4.1.0 Response rate.

The sample size of the population was 45, 45 questionnaires were designed and were wholly answered. This implies that the response rate was superlative.

##### 4.1.1 Gender

**Table 2 showing the Gender distribution of respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	30	66.7	66.7	66.7
Valid Females	15	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

**Source: primary data (2025)**

With reference to table 2 above shows that out of the total sample for the study, 66.7% were male, while 33.3% were female. This implies that the views of males were more represented in the study findings than those of the females.

#### 4.1.2 Age

**Table 3 showing Age group of respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-30 years	15	33.3	33.3	33.3
31-40 years	19	42.2	42.2	75.5
Valid 41-50 years	10	22.3	22.3	97.8
Above 50 years	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

**Source: Primary data (2025)**

With reference to table 3 above indicates that 33.3% lie between the age of 20-30 years ,42.2% make it to the age of 31-40 years ,22.3% lie between the age of 41-50 years ,and above the age of 50 years constituted 2.2%. This indicates that the majority of respondents were mature and the knowledge obtained from them was conducted. The employment of employees lie between the ages of 31-40 years at Mbale city is due to the fact that this is the most active group of persons that is required in the effective implementation of the operations of Mbale city hence guaranteeing the achievement of objectives.

### 4.1.3 Qualification.

**Table 4 Showing academic qualification of respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Secondary	6	13.3	13.3	13.3
Certificate	6	13.3	13.3	26.6
Diploma	23	51.1	51.1	77.7
Valid Degree	8	17.9	17.9	95.6
Masters	2	4.4	4.4	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

**Source: primary data (2025)**

With reference to table 4 above shows that 13.3%, 13.3%, 51.1% ,17.9% and 4.4% correspond to secondary, certificate, diploma, degree, and masters respectively. This indicates that all people employed by Mbale city have attained certain level of education and knowledge. This is however, not surprising that the Mbale city is known for employing people who have attained such level of education and knowledge. Thus with good education level, the respondents were able to clearly understand and interpret questions and give appropriate responses.

#### 4.1.5 Years of working

**Table 6 showing years of working by respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Less than 1 year	15	33.3	33.3	33.3
1-2 years	18	40.0	40.0	73.3
Above 3 years	12	26.7	26.7	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

**Source: Primary data (2025)**

Table 6 above shows that 33.3%, 40%, and 26.7%, correspond to less than 1 year, 1-2 years, and above 3 years respectively. This however implies that Mbale city employs experienced workers who have had reasonable numbers of years of experience with 40% such that the goals formulated by the entity can be achieved well besides this it also implies that majority of the respondents had served for a considerable period which indicates that most of the respondents had vast knowledge which could be relied upon by this study.

**4.2.0 Research question one: Finding out the root causes of family breakdown among the homes of Mbale city**

**4.2.1 Financial problems lead to stress, conflicts, and inability to meet basic needs, causing family breakdown**

**Table 7 Showing whether financial problems lead to stress, conflicts, and inability to meet basic needs, causing family breakdown**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	28	62.2	62.2	62.2
Agree	8	17.8	17.8	80.0
not sure	2	4.4	4.4	84.4
Disagree	4	8.9	8.9	93.3
strongly disagree	3	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2025)

Table 7 above indicates that 80% (62.2%, 17.8%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that financial problems lead to stress, conflicts, and inability to meet basic needs, causing family breakdown , 4.4% of the respondents were not sure to the statement while 15.6% (8.9%, 6.7%) of the respondents objected it however such findings were in accordance to Elsey.R.D. (2019) denoted that financial problems lead to stress, conflicts, and inability to meet basic needs, causing family breakdown.

#### 4.2.2 Infidelity creates mistrust, emotional detachment, and conflicts that weaken family bonds

**Table 8 Showing whether infidelity creates mistrust, emotional detachment, and conflicts that weaken family bonds**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	10	22.2	22.2	22.2
Agree	9	20.0	20.0	42.2
not sure	3	6.7	6.7	48.9
Disagree	12	26.7	26.7	75.6
strongly disagree	11	24.4	24.4	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2025)

With reference to table 8 above it can be seen that 42.2% (22.2%, 20%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that infidelity creates mistrust, emotional detachment, and conflicts that weaken family bonds, 51.1% (26.7%, 24.4%) were negative to the same statement while 6.7% of the respondents were not sure.

### 4.2.3 Poor communication results in misunderstandings, unresolved issues, and emotional distance between partners

**Table 9 Showing whether poor communication results in misunderstandings, unresolved issues, and emotional distance between partners**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	18	40.0	40.0	40.0
Agree	12	26.6	26.6	66.7
not sure	7	15.6	15.6	82.3
Disagree	3	6.6	6.6	88.9
strongly disagree	5	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2025)

Table 9 above indicates that out of total sample of the study, 66.6% (40%, 26.6%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that poor communication results in misunderstandings, unresolved issues, and emotional distance between partners, and 15.6% were not sure while 17.7% (6.6%, 11.1%) were negative to the same statement. This implies that poor communication results in misunderstandings, unresolved issues, and emotional distance between partners.

**4.2.4 Domestic violence, including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, leads to fear and separation**

**Table 10 Showing whether domestic violence, including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, leads to fear and separation**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	21	46.7	46.7	46.7
Agree	7	15.6	15.6	62.3
not sure	10	22.2	22.2	84.5
Disagree	2	4.4	4.4	88.9
strongly disagree	5	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

**Source: primary data (2025)**

With reference to table 10 above it can be seen that the majority 62.3% (46.7%, 15.6%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that domestic violence, including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, leads to fear and separation and 22.2% were not sure while 15.5% (4.4%, 11.1%) of the respondents were opposed to the same statement. This is an indication that domestic violence, including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, leads to fear and separation.

**4.2.5 Substance abuse such as alcoholism and drug addiction causes neglect, violence, and financial strain**

**Table 11 Showing whether substance abuse such as alcoholism and drug addiction causes neglect, violence, and financial strain**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	9	20.0	20.0	20.0
Agree	1	2.2	2.2	22.2
not sure	11	24.4	24.4	46.6
Disagree	16	35.6	35.6	82.2
strongly disagree	8	17.8	17.8	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2025)

With reference to table 11 above shows that out of total sample of the study, 22.2% (20%, 2.2%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that substance abuse such as alcoholism and drug addiction causes neglect, violence, and financial strain, 24.4% were not sure, 53.4% (35.6%, 17.8%) were remonstrance to the same statement there by implying that substance abuse such as alcoholism and drug addiction causes neglect, violence, and financial strain.

**4.3.0 Research question two: Finding out the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city**

**4.3.1 Death of parents results in orphaned children lacking care and support, making them vulnerable to street life**

**Table 12 Showing whether death of parents results in orphaned children lacking care and support, making them vulnerable to street life**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	22	48.9	48.9	48.9
Agree	8	17.8	17.8	66.7
not sure	2	4.4	4.4	71.1
Disagree	10	22.2	22.2	93.3
strongly disagree	3	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

**Source: primary data (2025)**

With reference to table 12 above it can be observed that 66.7%, (48.9%, 17.8%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that death of parents results in orphaned children lacking care and support, making them vulnerable to street life, 28.9% (22.2%, 6.7%) of the respondents were negative to the same statement while 4.4% were not sure. This was in line with Schrand, (2017) contends that death of parents results in orphaned children lacking care and support, making them vulnerable to street life. This implies that death of parents results in orphaned children lacking care and support, making them vulnerable to street life.

**4.3.2 Parental neglect due to substance abuse, irresponsibility, or abandonment leaves children with no choice but to survive on their own**

**Table 13 showing whether parental neglect due to substance abuse, irresponsibility, or abandonment leaves children with no choice but to survive on their own**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	21	46.6	46.6	46.6
Agree	9	20.0	20.0	66.6
not sure	1	2.2	2.2	68.8
Disagree	7	15.6	15.6	84.4
strongly disagree	7	15.6	15.6	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2025)

With reference to table 13 above ,it can be seen that that the majority 66.6%, (46.6%, 20%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that parental neglect due to substance abuse, irresponsibility, or abandonment leaves children with no choice but to survive on their own, and 2.2% of the respondents were not sure while 31.2% (15.6%, 15.6%) of the respondents were negative to the same statement however such findings were in accordance to Eccles, (2018) affirmed that parental neglect due to substance abuse, irresponsibility, or abandonment leaves children with no choice but to survive on their own there by indicating that parental neglect due to substance abuse, irresponsibility, or abandonment leaves children with no choice but to survive on their own.

**4.3.3 Child abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, forces children to escape from home to avoid harm**

**Table 14 showing whether child abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, forces children to escape from home to avoid harm**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	17	37.8	37.8	37.8
Agree	12	26.7	26.7	64.5
not sure	4	8.9	8.9	73.4
Disagree	7	15.5	15.5	88.9
strongly disagree	5	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2025)

With reference to table 14 above it can be observed that 64.5% (37.8%, 26.7%) of the respondents had a positive response to the statement that child abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, forces children to escape from home to avoid harm, 26.6% (15.5%, 11.1%) were negative to the same statement while 8.9% were not sure. This implies that child abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, forces children to escape from home to avoid harm.

**4.3.4 Forced labor and exploitation make children run away from abusive guardians and end up living on the streets**

**Table 15 Showing whether forced labor and exploitation make children run away from abusive guardians and end up living on the streets**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	2	4.4	4.4	4.4
Agree	8	17.8	17.8	22.2
not sure	6	13.3	13.3	35.5
Disagree	16	35.6	35.6	71.1
strongly disagree	13	28.9	28.9	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

**Source: primary data (2025)**

Table 15 above indicates that out of total sample of the study, 22.2% (4.4%, 17.8%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that forced labor and exploitation make children run away from abusive guardians and end up living on the streets, 13.3% of the respondents were not sure while majority of the respondents 64.5% (35.6%, 28.9%) objected the same statement hence implying that forced labor and exploitation make children run away from abusive guardians and end up living on the streets.

**4.3.5 Peer influence leads some children to the streets, where they engage in survival tactics such as begging and petty crimes**

**Table 16 showing whether peer influence leads some children to the streets, where they engage in survival tactics such as begging and petty crimes**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	22	48.9	48.9	48.9
Agree	10	22.2	22.2	71.1
not sure	3	6.7	6.7	77.8
Disagree	4	8.9	8.9	86.7
strongly disagree	6	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

**Source: primary data (2025)**

Table 16 above indicates that the majority of the 71.1% (48.9%, 22.2%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that peer influence leads some children to the streets, where they engage in survival tactics such as begging and petty crimes, and 6.7% of the respondents were not sure while 22.2% (8.9%, 13.3%) demurred to the same statement such findings were in line with Nassar, K. (2019) asserted that peer influence leads some children to the streets, where they engage in survival tactics such as begging and petty crimes. This is an indication that peer influence leads some children to the streets, where they engage in survival tactics such as begging and petty crimes.

**4.4.0 Research question three: Finding out the possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children in Mbale city**

**4.4.1 Providing free education and vocational training equips street children with skills for a better future and reduces their dependence on street life**

**Table 17 showing whether providing free education and vocational training equips street children with skills for a better future and reduces their dependence on street life**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	20	44.5	44.5	44.5
Agree	13	28.9	28.9	73.4
not sure	4	8.9	8.9	82.3
Disagree	3	6.7	6.7	89.0
strongly disagree	5	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

**Source: primary data (2025)**

With reference to table 17 above it can be seen that the majority 73.4% (44.5%, 28.9) of the respondents were positive to the statement that providing free education and vocational training equips street children with skills for a better future and reduces their dependence on street life, 17.8% (6.7%, 11.1%) were dissatisfied with the same statement while 8.9% of the respondents were not sure. This implies that providing free education and vocational training equips street children with skills for a better future and reduces their dependence on street life.

**4.4.2 Establishing rehabilitation centers offers shelter, counseling, and reintegration programs to help children transition back into society**

**The table 18 Showing whether establishing rehabilitation centers offers shelter, counseling, and reintegration programs to help children transition back into society**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	8	17.8	17.8	17.8
Agree	15	33.3	33.3	51.1
not sure	5	11.1	11.1	62.2
Disagree	13	28.9	28.9	91.1
strongly disagree	4	8.9	8.9	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2025)

Table 18 above shows that 51.1% (17.8%, 33.3%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that establishing rehabilitation centers offers shelter, counseling, and reintegration programs to help children transition back into society, 37.8% (28.9%, 8.9%) objected to the same statement while 11.1% of the respondents were not sure. These findings were carried out by to Beitler, M. (2016), opined that establishing rehabilitation centers offers shelter, counseling, and reintegration programs to help children transition back into society. This is an indication that establishing rehabilitation centers offers shelter, counseling, and reintegration programs to help children transition back into society.

**4.4.3 Strengthening family support programs helps prevent family breakdown by addressing poverty, domestic violence, and parental neglect**

**Table 19 Showing whether strengthening family support programs helps prevent family breakdown by addressing poverty, domestic violence, and parental neglect**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	14	31.1	31.1	31.1
Agree	11	24.4	24.4	55.5
not sure	6	13.4	13.4	68.9
Disagree	9	20.0	20.0	88.9
strongly disagree	5	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2025)

Table 19 above shows that majority 55.5% (31.1%, 24.4%) of the respondents had a positive response to the statement that strengthening family support programs helps prevent family breakdown by addressing poverty, domestic violence, and parental neglect, 13.4% of the respondents were not sure while 31.1% (20%, 11.1%) were negative to the same statement. This implies that strengthening family support programs helps prevent family breakdown by addressing poverty, domestic violence, and parental neglect.

**4.4.4 Enforcing child protection laws ensures that children’s rights are safeguarded and prevents exploitation, abuse, and child labor**

**Table 20 Showing whether enforcing child protection laws ensures that children’s rights are safeguarded and prevents exploitation, abuse, and child labor**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	3	6.7	6.7	6.7
Agree	9	20.0	20.0	26.7
not sure	12	26.7	26.7	53.4
Disagree	16	35.5	35.5	88.9
strongly disagree	5	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2025)

Table 20 above shows that out of total sample of the study 26.7% (6.7% ,20%) of the respondents had a positive response to the statement that enforcing child protection laws ensures that children’s rights are safeguarded and prevents exploitation, abuse, and child labor, 26.7% of the respondents were not sure while 46.6% (35.5%, 11.1%) protested to the same statement. This is an indication that enforcing child protection laws ensures that children’s rights are safeguarded and prevents exploitation, abuse, and child labor.

**4.4.5 Expanding social welfare programs provides financial aid, healthcare, and food assistance to vulnerable families, reducing the risk of children turning to the streets**

**Table 21 showing whether expanding social welfare programs provides financial aid, healthcare, and food assistance to vulnerable families, reducing the risk of children turning to the streets**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly agree	19	42.2	42.2	42.2
Agree	12	26.7	26.7	68.9
not sure	1	2.2	2.2	71.1
Disagree	8	17.8	17.8	88.9
strongly disagree	5	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Source: primary data (2025)

With reference to table 21, it can be observed that the majority 68.9% (42.2%, 26.7%) of the respondents were positive to the statement that expanding social welfare programs provides financial aid, healthcare, and food assistance to vulnerable families, reducing the risk of children turning to the streets, 2.2% of the respondents were not sure while 28.9% (17.8%, 11.1) remonstrated to the same statement. This was in accordance to Alison and Dean (2017), assert that expanding social welfare programs provides financial aid, healthcare, and food assistance to vulnerable families, reducing the risk of children turning to the streets. This implies that expanding social welfare programs provides financial aid, healthcare, and food assistance to vulnerable families, reducing the risk of children turning to the streets.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **5.0 Introduction.**

In this chapter the researcher gives a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendation in line with the research questions and objectives.

#### **5.1 Summary of findings**

The researcher provided a summary of findings in line with the objectives as follows;

##### **5.1.1 Research Question one: Findings on the root causes of family breakdown among the homes of Mbale city**

The study investigated into the root causes of family breakdown among the homes of Mbale city. Results showed that most respondents were positive to the statements that they were asked. For example; majority of respondents constituting 80% were positive to the statement that financial problems lead to stress, conflicts, and inability to meet basic needs, causing family breakdown ; 66.6% who were also the majority were positive to the statement poor communication results in misunderstandings, unresolved issues, and emotional distance between partners; 62.3% who also constituted the majority were positive to the statement that domestic violence, including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, leads to fear and separation.

On the other hand, 51.1% constituting the majority were negative to statement that infidelity creates mistrust, emotional detachment, and conflicts that weaken family bonds, besides 53.4% were negative to the statement that substance abuse such as alcoholism and drug addiction causes neglect, violence, and financial strain.

Basing on the above results, it can be concluded that root causes of family breakdown has a significant effect on among the homes of Mbale city.

### **5.1.2 Research Question two: Findings on the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city**

The study investigated into the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city. Majority of the respondents 66.7% of the respondents were positive to the statement that death of parents results in orphaned children lacking care and support, making them vulnerable to street life, 66.6% forming the majority were positive to the statement that parental neglect due to substance abuse, irresponsibility, or abandonment leaves children with no choice but to survive on their own, it can be observed that 64.5% were positive to the statement that child abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, forces children to escape from home to avoid harm, and 71.1% were positive to the statement that peer influence leads some children to the streets, where they engage in survival tactics such as begging and petty crimes while 64.5% forming the majority were negative to the statement that forced labor and exploitation make children run away from abusive guardians and end up living on the streets., it can be concluded that family breakdown has a significant effect on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city.

### **5.1.3 Question three: Findings on the possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children in Mbale city**

The findings revealed that 73.4% forming the majority were positive to the statement that providing free education and vocational training equips street children with skills for a better future and reduces their dependence on street life, 51.1% had a positive response to the statement that establishing rehabilitation centers offers shelter, counseling, and reintegration programs to help children transition back into society, 55.5% had a positive response to the statement that strengthening family support programs helps prevent family breakdown by addressing poverty, domestic violence, and parental neglect, and 68.9% had a positive response to the statement that social welfare programs provides financial aid, healthcare, and food assistance to vulnerable families, reducing the risk of children turning to the streets. On the other hand, 46.6% forming the majority disagreed to the statement that enforcing child protection laws ensures that children's rights are safeguarded and prevents exploitation, abuse, and child labor. Most responses were positive indicating that possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children have a significant effect in Mbale city.

## 5.2 Conclusion

Basing on the results of the first objective, it can be concluded that root causes of family breakdown has a significant effect on among the homes of Mbale city. Therefore should be enhanced by; improving public awareness about the importance of healthy family structures. Community sensitization programs, school-based counseling for youth, and inclusion of family life education in the curriculum are essential. Religious and cultural leaders should also play a role in encouraging family values and resolving disputes. Peer pressure and the influence of social media are growing contributors to family instability, particularly among youth. Hence, creating safe digital spaces and promoting responsible media usage can mitigate such influences. Empowering women and men economically through entrepreneurship and vocational training also helps reduce dependency and conflict.

Basing on the results of the second objective, it can be concluded that family breakdown has a significant effect on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city. This can be enhanced by raising awareness through campaigns and public dialogues, families can be educated on the consequences of separation, abuse, and neglect on children's wellbeing. Schools, religious institutions, and social workers must collaborate in identifying children from unstable homes and offering them psychosocial support before they resort to street life. Strengthening child protection units at community levels ensures early detection and intervention. Parenting classes, especially in vulnerable communities, can reduce the occurrence of abusive or neglectful behaviors. Economic empowerment of parents' particularly single mothers can help them provide better care. Community mentorship programs should be encouraged to give children positive role models.

It can also be concluded basing on objective three that possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children have a significant effect in Mbale city. This can be enhanced by strengthening family units through counseling, parenting workshops, and economic support can prevent family breakdown, a key driver of child displacement. Community outreach programs should include mobile clinics, feeding programs, and informal education centers to meet the immediate needs of children already living on the streets. Schools should be made more inclusive and flexible to accommodate street children, including those who may have dropped out. Collaboration between local leaders, social workers, and NGOs can facilitate the reintegration of street children into their families or safe foster homes.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

There is need for the government to invest in strong family welfare programs and enforce policies that support family unity and well-being. A national family support policy that integrates counseling, mental health services, and conflict resolution strategies should be prioritized. Social protection schemes like cash transfers and housing subsidies should target vulnerable families to reduce economic-related tensions. Government should collaborate with NGOs and faith-based organizations to deliver community-based parenting workshops and relationship counseling. Judiciary reforms must ensure timely resolution of family-related disputes while promoting mediation rather than separation. The education system should emphasize life skills training to prepare youths for responsible adulthood and marriage. Media campaigns that promote positive family roles and discourage domestic violence must be consistently run on television and radio.

There is need for the government to strengthen social support systems that protect children from the effects of family breakdown. This can begin with the formulation and enforcement of policies that mandate compulsory family counseling during divorce or separation processes. The government should fund and support community-based child welfare committees to monitor and report vulnerable children before they become street dwellers. Creating more accessible and well-equipped child rescue centers that offer education, shelter, and counseling services can help in reintegrating affected children. The government must also invest in school retention programs and provide free education materials to children from broken families. Strengthening the juvenile justice system to provide rehabilitation rather than punishment for street-connected children is essential.

There is need for the government to implement a comprehensive national policy specifically targeting the rehabilitation and protection of street children. This policy should include provisions for establishing well-funded shelters that provide food, clothing, healthcare, education, and psychosocial support. The government must also collaborate with non-governmental and faith-based organizations to strengthen outreach programs and ensure a coordinated response to street child issues. Allocating funds to train and deploy more social workers in urban and rural areas will ensure continuous monitoring and follow-up. The introduction of mobile rescue teams can help locate and respond to cases of child neglect or abuse in real-time.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent;

I am Chebet Rebecca carrying out research on the topic “impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city.” as a partial fulfillment for the award of bachelors degree of social work and social administration at Uganda Christian University .The questionnaire is designed to help me collect relevant information and therefore I kindly request you to participate in responding to the questions that was asked .However the information given wastreated confidential and will only be used for academic purpose.

#### SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

(Tick in the box provided)

1. Gender distribution of the respondent

a) Male                       b) Female

2. Marital status of the respondent

a) Single                       b) Married                       Divorced                       Widowed

3. Age bracket of the respondent (years)

a) 20-30                       b) 31-40                       c) 41-50                       C) 60 and above

4. Academic qualification of respondent

a) Secondary                       b) Certificate                       c) Diploma                       d) Bachelors'                       e) Masters

5. Years of working by the respondents.

a) Less than 1 year                       b) 1-2 years                       c) 3 years and above

**Section A: To investigate the root causes of family breakdown among the homes of Mbale city**

This section aims at investigating the root causes of family breakdown among the homes of Mbale city. Please indicate your opinion on the following statements using the Linkert scale. Key: 1= agree, 2= strongly agree; 3= not sure; 4= disagree; 5= strongly disagree

No		1	2	3	4	5
1	Financial problems lead to stress, conflicts, and inability to meet basic needs, causing family breakdown.					
2	Infidelity creates mistrust, emotional detachment, and conflicts that weaken family bonds.					
3	Poor communication results in misunderstandings, unresolved issues, and emotional distance between partners.					
4	Domestic violence, including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, leads to fear and separation.					
5	Substance abuse such as alcoholism and drug addiction causes neglect, violence, and financial strain.					

**Section B: To assess the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city**

This section aims at assessing the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city. Please indicate your opinion on the following statements using the Linkert scale. Key: 1= agree, 2= strongly agree; 3= not sure; 4= disagree; 5= strongly disagree.

No		1	2	3	4	5
1	Death of parents results in orphaned children lacking care and support, making them vulnerable to street life.					
2	Parental neglect due to substance abuse, irresponsibility, or abandonment leaves children with no choice but to survive on their own.					

3	Child abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, forces children to escape from home to avoid harm.					
4	Forced labor and exploitation make children run away from abusive guardians and end up living on the streets.					
5	Peer influence leads some children to the streets, where they engage in survival tactics such as begging and petty crimes.					

**Section C: To find out the possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children in Mbale city**

This section aims at finding out the possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children in Mbale city. Please indicate your opinion on the following statements using the Linkert scale. Key: **1= agree, 2= strongly agree; 3= not sure; 4= disagree; 5= strongly disagree.**

No		1	2	3	4	5
1	Providing free education and vocational training equips street children with skills for a better future and reduces their dependence on street life.					
2	Establishing rehabilitation centers offers shelter, counseling, and reintegration programs to help children transition back into society.					
3	Strengthening family support programs helps prevent family breakdown by addressing poverty, domestic violence, and parental neglect.					
4	Enforcing child protection laws ensures that children's rights are safeguarded and prevents exploitation, abuse, and child labor.					
5	Expanding social welfare programs provides financial aid, healthcare, and food assistance to vulnerable families, reducing the risk of children turning to the streets.					

## **APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**First research objective: To investigate the root causes of family breakdown among the homes of Mbale city**

1. What are the major factors that contribute to family breakdown in your community?
2. How do financial difficulties impact family stability and relationships?
3. In what ways do domestic violence and conflicts contribute to family breakdown?
4. How does substance abuse affect family relationships and lead to separation?

**Second research objective: To assess the impact of family breakdown on the prevalence of street children in Mbale city**

1. How does family breakdown contribute to the increasing number of street children?
2. What challenges do children from broken families' face that push them to the streets?
3. In your opinion, how does parental neglect and lack of care affect children's likelihood of living on the streets?
4. What are the long-term effects of family breakdown on children's emotional and psychological well-being?

**Third research objective: To find out the possible strategies of mitigating the challenges of street children in Mbale city**

1. What interventions can be implemented to prevent children from ending up on the streets?
2. How effective are rehabilitation centers and social welfare programs in addressing the issue of street children?
3. What role should families and communities play in reintegrating street children into society?
4. What policies and support systems do you think the government should strengthen to reduce the number of street children?



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Office of the Academic Registrar

To TO THE TOWN CLERK  
MBALE CITY COUNCIL

The student is  
authorised to collect  
data in mbale

Dear Sir/Madam,  
Re: Academic Research  
Christian greetings!



We are honored to introduce to you Mr. Mrs./Miss. CHERET RABEZA  
Of Registration Number; S22/191C/RSU/012 pursuing a Masters  
Degree/Postgraduate Diploma / Bachelor's Degree

He/ she is required to carry out an academic research on the topic  
IMPACT OF FAMILY BREAKDOWN ON THE RDEYA LEACE OF  
STREET CHILDREN IN MBALE CITY

and thereafter produce a well bound hard cover research report (MAROON) in color for undergraduate and three (BLACK) copies for Postgraduate students as a University requirement for the award of a degree/diploma in the academic discipline that he / she is pursuing.

We shall be grateful for the help you may offer to him or her accordingly.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,



Mr. Akampurira Timothy  
Academic Registrar