

**FAMILY WELLBEING AND NEGLECT PATTERNS IN BLENDS ON
ADOLESCENTS: A CASE OF MUKONO TOWN COUNCIL**

BRENDAH KARIGIRWA

J22B15/168

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENT OF THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF BACHELOR
OF SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

September, 2024



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my original work and has not been submitted to any institution of learning.

Signature.....*Basha*.....

Date...*09/09/2024*.....

KARIGIRWA BRENDAH

J22B15/168

APPROVAL

This research titled "*Family Wellbeing and Neglect Patterns in Blends On Adolescents: A Case Of Mukono Town Council*" has been conducted by Karigirwa Brenda J22B15/168 under my supervision.

KUKUGIZA DOREEN BUSINGE (Mrs)

Signature.....*B. Karigirwa*.....

Date.....*9/9/2024*.....

Research Supervisor

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my parents who advised, supported and mentored me throughout my education up to university level. Above all, I thank God for guidance and provision towards completion of this dissertation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am greatly indebted to Madam Kukugiza Doreen who was my supervisor for her effective supervision, dedication, availability and professional advice.

I would also like to acknowledge my dear family for always being there for me in all situations.

I would like extend my gratitude to the entire community which included family heads, adolescents from Bugujju village, Mukono district for giving me relevant information that made the study successful.

Lastly, I thank God who has given me good health and strength to carry out the research right away from the beginning to the end and successfully.

Table of Contents

DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Problem statement.....	4
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	5
1.4 Objectives of the study.....	5
1.5 Research questions.....	5
1.6 Scope of the study.....	6
1.6.1 Content scope.....	6
1.6.2 Geographical scope.....	6
1.6.3 Time scope.....	6
1.7 Justification of the study.....	6
1.8 Significance of the study.....	7
1.9 Conceptual framework.....	8
CHAPTER TWO.....	10
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
2.0 Introduction.....	10
2.1 Concept of family wellbeing.....	10
2.2 Concept of blended families.....	11
2.3 Concept of child neglect.....	12
2.4 Empirical review on economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns.....	13
2.5 Empirical review on social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns.....	15
2.6 Empirical review on emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns.....	17
2.7 Summary and literature gap.....	19

CHAPTER THREE	22
METHODOLOGY	22
3.0 Introduction.....	22
3.1 Research design.....	22
3.2 Study area and population.....	23
3.3 Sample size determination	23
3.4 Sampling techniques and procedure.....	24
3.5 Data collection methods	25
3.5.1 Questionnaires.....	25
3.5.2 Key Informant Interviews	25
3.6 Data collection tools.....	26
3.6.1 Questionnaire guide	26
3.6.2 Key informant interview (KII) guide	26
3.7 Validity and reliability.....	27
3.7.1 Validity and reliability of quantitative research.....	27
3.7.2 Validity and reliability of qualitative research	28
3.8 Procedure of data collection.....	29
3.9 Data analysis	29
3.9.1 Analysis of quantitative data.....	29
3.9.2 Analysis of qualitative data	30
3.10 Ethical considerations	30
3.11 Limitations and delimitation.....	31
CHAPTER FOUR	32
PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS	32
4.0 Introduction.....	32
4.1 Response rate.....	32
4.2 Findings on demographic characteristics of respondents	33
4.2.1 Gender of the respondents	33
4.2.2 Age of the respondents.....	33
4.2.3 Education level of the respondents.....	34
4.3 To Establish the relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council.....	35

4.3.1 To establish the relationship between economic wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families.....	39
4.4 Determining the relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council.....	40
4.4.1 To determine the relationship between social wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families.....	43
4.5 Investigating the relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council.....	44
4.5.1 To investigate the relationship between emotional wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families	47
CHAPTER FIVE	49
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	49
5.0 Introduction.....	49
5.1 Discussion of findings.....	49
5.1.1 To establish the relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends among adolescents in Mukono Town Council.....	49
5.1.2 To establish relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends among adolescents in Mukono Town Council.....	50
5.1.3 To investigate the relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council	51
6.0 Summary of findings	53
6.1 Conclusions.....	54
6.2 Recommendations	54
6.3 Areas for further research	56
REFERENCES	56
APPENDICES.....	60
Appendix 1: Questionnaire	60
Appendix 2: Interview Guide.....	63

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Population, sample size and sampling methods	24
Table 2: Response rate for questionnaires.....	32
Table 3: Gender.....	33
Table 4: Age	33
Table 5: Level of education	34
Table 6: Economic wellbeing of the family	36
Table 7: Pearson’s correlation on economic wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families.....	38
Table 8: Social wellbeing of the family	40
Table 9: Pearson’s correlation on social wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families.....	43
Table 10: Emotional wellbeing of the family	44
Table 11: Pearson’s correlation on emotional wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families	47

ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the effect of family wellbeing on neglect patterns in blends among adolescents: a case of Mukono Town Council. The study was guided by three objectives: establishing the relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns among adolescents, determining the relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns among adolescents, and investigating the relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns among adolescents in Mukono Town Council.

The study was carried out using cross-sectional research design where quantitative research approach and qualitative research approach was utilized. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the teenagers/ adolescents aged 12-18 years from selected heads of blended families in Mukono Town Council, whereas interviews were conducted with key informants who are the Probation Officer, LC1 chairman, local councillors & social workers

The study found strong positive relationships between family well-being dimensions and neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council, with economic well-being (less than 5%), social well-being (less than 5%), and emotional well-being (less than 5%) all significantly associated with lower levels of neglect. Families with better economic stability, positive social interactions, and emotional support were less likely to experience neglect, highlighting the importance of economic, social, and emotional support in reducing neglect and fostering a supportive environment for adolescents in blended families.

The study suggested targeted economic support programs for example Financial assistance for low income families, access to quality health care.

Strengthened social support networks through implementing initiatives like community centers that offer various services for example counseling, support groups and skill building work shops.

Enhanced emotional support in families, through creating space for open discussions and expression of feelings and engaging in activities that promote emotional wellbeing for example sharing experiences, practicing active listening and offering empathy.

Enhanced educational programs to increase awareness about neglect and improve on family well-being in blended families in Mukono Town Council.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Blended families, formed when one or both partners have children from previous relationships, face specific challenges that affect family wellbeing and neglect patterns, specifically among adolescents. In Mukono Town Council, rising cases of child neglect, with 3,001 cases reported in 2023, and 28% of children lacking basic needs, show a critical issue (MDLG Report, 2024; Nabayinda et al., 2023). This study sought to explore the intricate relationship between family wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families, showing a significant research gap and focusing to inform targeted interventions to improve adolescent outcomes in Mukono District.

1.1 Background of the Study

Family wellbeing and neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families have got increasing attention due to the unique challenges these families face (Daniel, 2018). Blended families, formed when one or both partners in a relationship have children from previous relationships, which navigate complex dynamics including step-siblings, step-parents, and half-siblings (Avdibegović & Brkić, 2020). These dynamics can influence family togetherness, communication, and finally the overall wellbeing. Family wellbeing in this context refers to the holistic health of the family unit, encompassing emotional, psychological, and social aspects. Neglect patterns in blended families can increase when children do not receive enough emotional support, supervision, or basic needs, resulting into adverse developmental outcomes for adolescents (Ünal & Boz, 2020). Families, the basic unit of society, are meant to avail a safe and nurturing environment for children to survive. Unfortunately, this ideal isn't always met especially with the high global concern of child neglect in blended families (Vanderminden et al., 2019).

Globally, the issue of child neglect is a major issue, impacting families across all socioeconomic backgrounds in both developed and developing countries (Hecker et al.,

2019). For example in 2022, statistics show that 78.3% of substantiated cases in USA included neglect (including medical neglect), 18.3% included physical neglect, 9.3% included social neglect, and 8.5% included psychological neglect. McCoy & Keen (2022) also suggested that in 2021, about 1640 children succumbed to neglect in the US, around three quarters of whom were < three years of age. In these developed nations like USA, socio-economic disparities, cultural factors, and inadequate social support systems result into the prevalence of neglect. The repercussions extend beyond individual families, impacting societal well-being and cycles of poverty and dysfunction (Toth & Manly, 2019). Efforts to address child neglect in these countries often include a combination of legislative measures, social services, and community-based initiatives focused at prevention and intervention (Greene et al., 2020).

In Eastern and Southern Africa, child neglect is common. By way of example, research on child neglect in Swaziland in 2017, child neglect in Tanzania by UNICEF (2022) and Zimbabwe's national baseline study on teenage life experiences conducted in 2022 found high kinds of social neglect towards girls and boys ahead of the age of 18 and stated that other forms of physical neglect may also be prevalent. Tanzania Infant Neglect Survey of 2020, unearthed that the ages of 18, 3 in 10 females and 1 in 7 males had encountered social neglect. In comparison, three quarters of both women and males witnessed physical neglect due to the chronological age of 18 years by parents and sexual partners. Exactly, the same study indicated that 25% of the studied were exposed during childhood to psychological neglect by adults (UNICEF, 2022).

Blended families are a common family structure in countries like the USA, the United Kingdom, Germany, and India. In the USA, about 16% of children live in blended families (Therrien et al., 2021). These families often encounter higher levels of economic stress and lower levels of social support compared to nuclear families. In the United Kingdom, blended families constitute an important portion of the family structures, with challenges including managing co-parenting arrangements and educating family members (Sandhya, 2020). Germany also reports same issues, with stepchildren undergoing varying levels of emotional and social support. In Asia,

countries like India are witnessing an increase in blended families because of rising divorce rates, which results to unique cultural and social challenges in managing family dynamics (Hewitt & Churchill, 2020).

In Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, the concept of blended families is also prevalent, influenced by cultural practices and socioeconomic conditions. Countries like Nigeria and South Africa have reported significant instances of blended families due to factors such as high remarriage rates and the impact of HIV/AIDS, which often leaves children orphaned and re-integrated into new family units (Mkabile & Swartz, 2020). These blended families face challenges such as economic instability, lack of access to education, and limited social support. In Kenya, blended families are increasingly common, with similar issues of economic hardship and social integration affecting family wellbeing and contributing to neglect patterns among adolescents (Vanderminden et al., 2019).

In Uganda, blended families are an important aspect of the social fabric. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2022) shows that many households in Uganda are blended, with complex family dynamics resulting from remarriages and cohabitation. These families often encounter economic challenges, less access to social services, and cultural stigmatization, all of which can lead to neglect patterns (Natukunda et al., 2021). Adolescents in blended families in Uganda are at risk of emotional and educational neglect, which affects their development and future prospects. Addressing these issues require interventions that aim at economic support, mental health services, and community-based programs to improve family wellbeing and decrease on neglect among adolescents in blended families (Wikle & Hoagland, 2020).

Uganda isn't any different because children have continued to face various cases of neglect in their families, mostly acceptable and reinforced (Ainamani et al., 2021). Raising Voices and Save the Children in 2015 indicated that 98 percent of children had connection with physical or psychological neglect (including those in schools and far from schools aged 18 years). Furthermore, in Mukono, child neglect underscores broader issues of poverty, inadequate social services, and cultural norms. Mukono,

like many regions in Uganda, faces challenges in addressing child neglect effectively due to resource constraints and limited awareness (Sserwanja et al., 2021). For example according to the probation officer Mukono District Local Government (2024), Mukono district has the highest cases of children tortured and neglected by their parents in the country with 3,001 children tortured and neglected by their parents last year 2023. Efforts to combat neglect in Mukono necessitate collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and local communities to enact sustainable solutions and provide comprehensive support to affected families.

1.2 Problem statement

Families serve as a haven for children, providing the love, security, and resources they need to flourish. These families are meant to provide nurturing environments where children can thrive and develop to their fullest potential (Namugga, 2021). However, the reality presents a starkly different contrast with increased cases of child neglect being reported in Mukono district, particularly among adolescents in blended families (Sserwanja et al., 2021). For example, statistics according to the probation officer MDLG Report (2024) indicate that Mukono district has the highest cases of children tortured and neglected by their parents or guardians in the country, with 3,001 children tortured and neglected in 2023. 28% of children are reported to face unmet basic needs, for example food and shelter, causing malnutrition and bad living conditions (Nabayinda et al., 2023). These statistics show a downward trend in child welfare, with neglect cases increasing over time. Factors resulting to this include economic hardships, parental health issues, and insufficient social support systems (Ainamani et al., 2021).

If not addressed, the consequences will increase, with long-term effects on children's educational outcomes, psychological wellbeing, and future socioeconomic status (UNICEF, 2022). Despite the nature of this issue, there remains a research gap in understanding the comprehensive effects of family wellbeing on child neglect in Mukono Town Council. While previous research by scholars like Avdibegović & Brkić (2020), Daniel (2018), and Namugga (2021) concentrated on isolated aspects such as

economic deprivation or parental mental health, there are no studies that have explored the nature of family wellbeing in the context of blended families. While some scholars have explored the correlation between poverty and child neglect, fewer have engaged in how social and emotional wellbeing within families connect to influence neglect. Existing research often lacks localized data, overlooking regional specificities which could inform more effective interventions. This study then, aimed to occupy this gap through examining the effect of family wellbeing on neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents: a case of Mukono Town Council.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of family wellbeing on neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents: a case of Mukono Town Council.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- i. To establish the relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council.
- ii. To determine the relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council.
- iii. To investigate the relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council.

1.5 Research questions

- i. What is the relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council?
- ii. What is the relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council?
- iii. What is the relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council?

1.6 Scope of the study

The scope of the study covered three dimensions that is; content, geographical and time and these were discussed in detail below.

1.6.1 Content scope

This study specifically focused on; establishing the relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents, determining the relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents, and investigating the relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council.

1.6.2 Geographical scope

Geographically, the study was conducted in Mukono Town Council located in Mukono Municipality, Mukono district. Mukono Town Council was chosen because it is among the areas in the district that has registered high cases of child neglect among the 3001 reported cases of child neglect in 2023 by the probation officer at the district local government.

1.6.3 Time scope

The study focused on scholarly material from the period 2019 to 2024. It was also carried out for a period of three month from June to August, 2024.

1.7 Justification of the study

The justification of this study laid in the urgent need to address the rising cases of neglect among adolescents in Mukono Town Council, especially among blended families, where unique challenges exacerbate neglect patterns among adolescents. With 3,001 instances of child neglect reported in 2023 and 28% of children lacking basic needs (MDLG Report, 2024; Nabayinda et al., 2023), it is critical to understand how family wellbeing influences these patterns. This study aimed to fill a significant

research gap, providing insights that can inform targeted interventions to enhance family support systems and improve adolescent outcomes in Mukono District.

1.8 Significance of the study

The study will be of help to policymakers by providing evidence-based insights into the root causes and dimensions of child neglect in Mukono Town Council. This will enable the formulation of policies and interventions which address the needs of children and families in the region ,resulting to improved child welfare and protection measures.

The study will be of help to social workers and child protection agencies by offering an understanding of how various aspects of family wellbeing affect child neglect. This knowledge will help in designing and implementing more effective support programs and services that can better identify and mitigate neglect, ensuring the safety and development of children in vulnerable families.

The study will assist community leaders and local organizations through highlighting the significance of community involvement in addressing child neglect. The findings will encourage community-based initiatives and collaborative efforts to support families, improve social support networks, and create a safer and more nurturing environment for children.

The study will assist educators and school administrators through providing data on how neglect affects children's academic performance and behavioral development. This information can be used to formulate supportive educational policies and programs that show the needs of neglected children, helping them achieve better educational outcomes and personal development.

The study will assist healthcare providers through throwing more light on the health and hygiene issues concerning child neglect. Understanding these dimensions will help in the development of healthcare interventions and preventive measures that can enhance the overall health and wellbeing of neglected children, reducing preventable diseases and health complications.

The study will assist future researchers through filling existing gaps in the literature on child neglect and family wellbeing. The analysis provided by this study will serve as a reference for future studies, guiding further research on effective strategies to reduce child neglect and enhance family support systems in similar contexts.

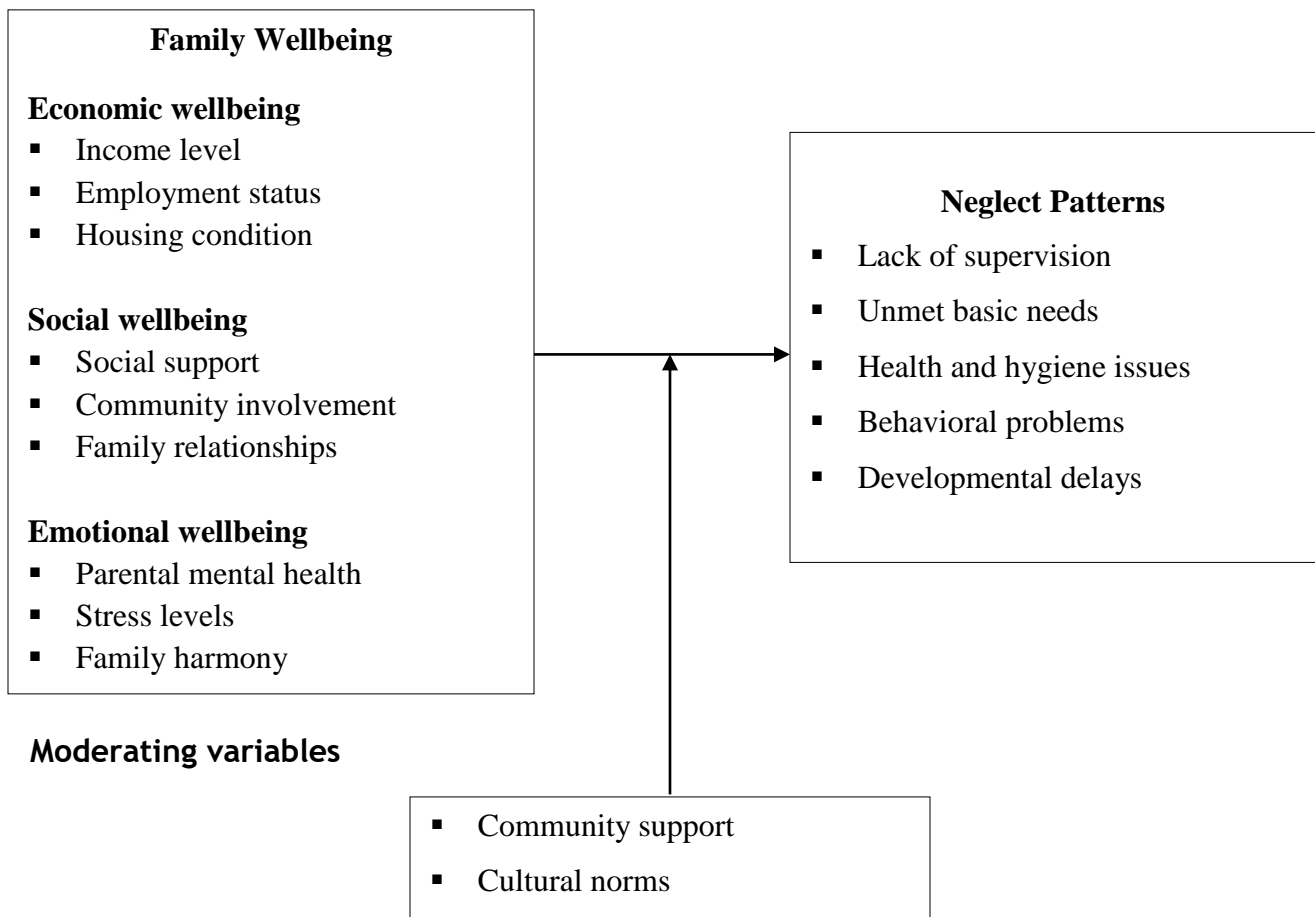
Finally the study will assist the general public by raising awareness on the prevalence and results of child neglect. Increased awareness can foster a more supportive community environment, encourage reporting of neglect cases, and enhance collective action to protect and nurture vulnerable children in Mukono Town Council and beyond.

1.9 Conceptual framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Independent variable
variable

Dependent



Source: *Adopted from, Namugga (2021) and modified by the researcher (2024)*

The conceptual framework for this study examines the effect of family wellbeing on neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council. The independent variable, family wellbeing, is divided into three dimensions: economic wellbeing (income level, employment status, housing condition), social wellbeing (social support, community involvement, family relationships), and emotional wellbeing (parental mental health, stress levels, family harmony). The dependent variable, neglect patterns, encompasses lack of supervision, unmet basic needs, health and hygiene issues, behavioral problems, and developmental delays. Moderating variables, including community support and cultural norms, influence the relationship between family wellbeing and neglect patterns among blends/adolescents. This framework aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how various aspects of family wellbeing contribute to child neglect, thereby informing targeted interventions and policies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the various schools of thought revolving around family wellbeing and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents. This chapter identified theories put across by scholars in relation to family well being. For the research questions identified in chapter one, the researcher highlighted the findings of different authors, on the effects of child neglect on family wellbeing.

2.1 Concept of family wellbeing

The concept of child neglect, a form of child maltreatment, has been studied by scholars in recent years. According to Petrucci (2019), child neglect is a pattern of failing to meet a child's basic needs for physical and emotional well-being. This neglect can involve the provision of food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, affection, and educational opportunities. Unlike abuse, which involves acts of commission, neglect is characterized by omissions, a lack of action that leaves children vulnerable and deprived (Dolan et al., 2020).

Elaborating on the distinct forms of neglect, Dubowitz et al. (2016) categorized neglect into physical, educational, emotional, and medical neglect. Physical neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic physical needs, while educational neglect includes the inadequate support for learning (Alexander & Robbins, 2019). Emotional neglect includes the caregiver's emotional unavailability to the child's emotional needs. Medical neglect involves the failure to provide necessary medical care, causing untreated illnesses or preventable health problems (O'Connor et al., 2019).

The effect of child neglect goes beyond the individual child, affecting families and society as a whole. According to Walsh et al. (2020), neglected children are at a risk of experiencing developmental delays, academic difficulties, behavioral problems, and

mental health issues. The stress and strain of caring for a neglected child can negatively affect family dynamics and overall well-being. Understanding the forms of neglect and their results is crucial for developing interventions to protect children and strengthen families (López Narbona et al., 2021).

2.2 Concept of blended families

Blended families, also known as stepfamilies, are family units where one or both partners have children from previous relationships. These families are becoming common in our transnational world, influenced by various cultural, social, and economic factors (Therrien, Le Gall, & Geoffrion, 2021). Blended families bring together diverse family dynamics, necessitating adjustments in family roles and relationships. The integration process often includes navigating complex emotional landscapes, with children and adults alike adapting to new family structures and relationships. The unique challenges of blended families include managing conflicts between step-siblings, forming new parental roles, and addressing feelings of loyalty and loss among children (Sandhya, 2020).

Globally, the concept of blended families varies significantly across cultures. For example, in some Western societies, blended families are prevalent and socially accepted, while in other cultures, they might be less common or face social stigma (Hewitt & Churchill, 2020). Research shows that adolescents in blended families often encounter higher levels of stress and emotional turmoil compared to those in nuclear families, due to the complexities of navigating multiple family relationships (Wikle & Hoagland, 2020). In post-conflict settings, such as Northern Uganda, blended families can also be a source of support and stability for orphans or experienced trauma, although they might present unique problems related to family integration and stability (Natukunda et al., 2021). Understanding these diverse experiences is important for developing supportive interventions that cater to the particular needs of blended families.

2.3 Concept of child neglect

Child neglect is the violence that occurs to those under 18 years. It involves all sorts of physical or psychological mistreating, neglect and other forms of neglect causing real or possible challenges for health, survival, growth or self-respect with this kid in life. As a kind of child neglect, vulnerability to intimate partner neglect can be included (Felsher et al., 2010). Child neglect, a pervasive form of child mistreatment, is the failure of a parent or caregiver to meet a child's basic needs for physical and emotional well-being. This failure can be intentional or unintentional, but the result is the same: children are deprived of the care and support essential for healthy development. Unlike abuse, which involves deliberate acts of harm, neglect involves a lack of action or provision (Turner et al., 2019).

The specific forms that neglect takes can change. Physical neglect includes the failure to provide for a child's basic necessities, such as adequate food, clothing, shelter, and medical care. Children undergoing physical neglect may be underfed, poorly clothed for weather conditions, or live in unsafe environments. They may also lack access to essential medical care, causing untreated illnesses or unpreventable health problems (Namugga, 2021).

Emotional neglect, involves the caregiver's emotional unavailability to the child's emotional needs. This can result into lack of affection, warmth, or responsiveness. Neglected children may feel isolated, unloved, and unworthy of attention. They may undergo chronic emotional distress, anxiety, or difficulty forming healthy attachments. Neglect can also involve social neglect, which involves the failure to provide for a child's social interaction and development. This can involve isolation from peers, lack of educational opportunities, or inadequate supervision in public settings. The effect of these various forms of neglect can be damaging to a child's physical, emotional, and social well-being (Featherstone et al., 2019).

Child neglect will be looked at in terms of physical, social and psychological neglect. Physical neglect means, any voluntary physical activity that may cause a young child physical damage or disability. Psychological neglect is a behavior phenomenon that

impairs the mental maturity or feeling of self-worth of a kid (World Health Organization, 2015).

2.4 Empirical review on economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns

A study by Berger & Font (2019) explored the relationship between economic hardship and child neglect in the United States. They found that families undergoing poverty and financial instability were significantly likely to neglect their children because of stress and limited resources. (Cancian, Yang & Slack (2019) examined the effect of economic support programs on child neglect rates, sum up that families getting consistent financial aid had less cases of neglect. Their research emphasized the importance of economic stability in reducing neglect.

A study by Elliott & Bowen (2020) analyzed data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, showing a clear link between economic insecurity and child neglect. They found out that job loss and income instability were major predictors of neglectful behaviors among parents. Slack et al. (2020) used data from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being to show that economic hardship increased the likelihood of child neglect, with income volatility being an important risk factor.

A study by Brown & De Cao (2021) in the United Kingdom aimed at the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on family economic wellbeing and child neglect. Their findings showed that economic downturns and job losses during the pandemic significantly increased the cases of child neglect. Similarly, Mangiavacchi, Piccoli & Pieroni (2021) investigated the impact of economic crises on child welfare in Italy, finding that children in economically disadvantaged families encountered higher risks of neglect and inadequate care.

A study by Gagné et al. (2021) in Canada examined the connection of economic wellbeing and child neglect, showing that families with less income levels were more exposed to neglecting their children due to financial stress and limited access to resources. A study by Cross et al. (2021) in Australia found out that economic hardship

was a sign of child neglect, with parents struggling to provide basic necessities for their children in periods of financial strain.

A study by Sun and Li (2022) in China analyzed the effect of rural-urban migration on family economic wellbeing and child neglect. Their research showed that children left behind in rural areas while parents migrated for work were likely to undergo neglect due to the absence of parental care and economic support. Zhao et al. (2022) investigated the impacts of income disparity on child neglect in urban Chinese families, finding that less-income households had higher incidences of neglect compared to their wealthier counterparts.

A study by Vanderminden & Esala (2023) in the United States examined the impacts of economic inequality on child neglect, showing that children from low-income families were affected by neglectful conditions. Their findings were in line with those of Font and Berger (2023), who conducted a longitudinal study on the long-term effects of economic hardship on child neglect, showing that persistent financial difficulties significantly increased the risk of neglect over time.

A study by Kim et al. (2024) in South Korea explored the relationship between economic stress and child neglect, finding that families experiencing financial strain were likely to get involved in neglectful behaviors due to stress and lack of resources. Lee and Choi (2024) investigated the role of social welfare programs in mitigating child neglect in economically disadvantaged families, concluding that enhanced economic support reduced neglect rates.

A study by Olusanya & Alabi (2023) in Nigeria examined how economic challenges bring about child neglect, with findings showing that financial challenges severely limit parents' ability to provide enough care and supervision. A study by Amusa and Oyedeji (2023) highlighted that economic deprivation in rural Nigerian communities led to higher cases of child neglect, emphasizing the need for economic interventions to support vulnerable families.

A study by Namara & Mugisha (2023) in Uganda investigated the relationship between family income levels and child neglect, revealing that lower-income households were more likely to neglect their children because of limited resources and high stress levels. A study by Okello and Nsubuga (2023) examined the effect of economic hardship on child welfare in rural Ugandan communities, finding that financial instability was a major contributor to child neglect.

2.5 Empirical review on social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns

A study by Berger & Slack (2019) in the United States examined the influence of social support on child neglect. They found that families with strong social networks and community support had less chances to neglect their children. Families isolated from social support systems caused higher rates of neglect due to the lack of external assistance and emotional support. Liu & Merritt (2019) analyzed data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, showing that social isolation and weak family relationships significantly increased the risk of child neglect.

A study by Thompson & Greeson (2020) investigated the role of community involvement in preventing child neglect. Their research showed that communities with active participation in child welfare programs and neighborhood support initiatives had low rates of neglect. They emphasized the significance of communal responsibility in safeguarding children's wellbeing. Almquist & Brännström (2020) found that children in socially cohesive neighborhoods undergo fewer neglectful situations, attributing this to the collective monitoring and support from community members.

A study by Jaffee et al. (2020) explored the effect of family relationships on child neglect. They found out that children from families with strong, positive relationships were less likely to be neglected. The presence of a supportive and nurturing environment within the family acted as a protective factor against neglect. A study by Klein and McKeown (2020) showed that familial discord and poor communication were predictors of child neglect, stressing the need for interventions that strengthen family bonds.

A study by Taylor & Ruiz (2021) focused on the interplay between social support networks and child neglect. Their findings showed that families with access to robust social support systems, including extended family, friends, and community resources, had low chances of neglect. They argued that social support reduces stress and provides practical assistance, reducing the likelihood of neglectful behavior. Smith & Harper (2021) found that social isolation, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, led to increased rates of child neglect as families were cut off from their usual support networks.

A study by Yoshikawa & Hsueh (2021) examined the impacts of community programs on child neglect in low-income families. They found that participation in community-based parenting programs and support groups reduced neglect rates by availing parents with knowledge, resources, and a sense of community. Similarly, a study by Feldman and Lowe (2021) showed the positive impact of social services and community centers in urban areas, where such programs helped reduce the stress and isolation that often lead to neglect.

A study by Masten & Motti-Stefanidi (2022) investigated the role of social cohesion in child neglect. They found that children living in socially cohesive neighborhoods, where residents trust and help each other, were less likely to undergo neglect. This was attributed to the protective environment created by strong social bonds and community vigilance. Li & Liu (2022) reported that social cohesion in Chinese urban communities played a crucial task in reducing child neglect, as collective efforts in monitoring and supporting families created a safer environment for children.

A study by O'Hara & Buckley (2022) analyzed the effect of family stability on child neglect in Ireland. They found that stable family environments, characterized by consistent caregiving and supportive relationships, significantly reduced the risk of neglect. Families undergoing frequent conflicts and instability were more prone to neglecting their children. Costa & Figueiredo (2022) in Portugal found that family instability, often resulting from marital discord and parental separation, increased the likelihood of child neglect.

A study by An & Lee (2023) concentrated on the impact of social integration on child neglect among immigrant families in South Korea. They found that immigrant families who were well-integrated into their communities, with strong social networks and participation in community activities, exhibited low rates of child neglect. Families undergoing social exclusion and isolation faced higher risks of neglect. Kim & Lee (2023) showed that social support from both formal (social services) and informal (community and extended family) sources reduced child neglect rates among low-income families in South Korea.

2.6 Empirical review on emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns

A study by Berger & Font (2019) examined the connection between parental mental health and child neglect in the United States. Their research showed that parents suffering from depression, anxiety, or other mental health issues were likely to neglect their children because of diminished emotional availability and coping capacity. A study by Rodriguez & Tucker (2019) found that maternal depression was a predictor of child neglect, as depressive symptoms impeded a mother's ability to provide adequate care and supervision.

A study by Slack et al. (2020) explored the effect of parental stress on child neglect. They found out that high stress levels among parents, mostly coming from financial difficulties or relationship problems, increased the likelihood of neglectful behaviors. This was corroborated by research from Taylor & Ruiz (2020), who found that chronic stress undermined parenting capabilities, leading to higher incidences of child neglect. Their studies emphasize the critical role of stress management in preventing neglect.

Bartlett & Vivrette (2021) investigated the relationship between family harmony and child neglect. They found that families with more conflicts and poor emotional cohesion were more prone to neglect their children. The lack of a supportive and stable family environment exacerbated neglectful tendencies. Frederick & Goddard (2021) showed that children from families experiencing high levels of domestic

conflict and emotional discord were at a greater risk of neglect, underscoring the importance of family harmony in child welfare.

Lee & Yoon (2021) in South Korea examined the role of parental mental health on child neglect. Their findings indicated that parents with untreated mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety, were more likely to neglect their children. This was supported by research from Choi & Kim (2021), who found out that emotional wellbeing of parents influenced their ability to provide consistent and adequate care, with mental health issues leading to increased neglect.

Sun & Li (2022) analyzed the emotional wellbeing of migrant families in China and its impact on child neglect. They found that children left behind by migrating parents experienced higher levels of neglect because of the emotional strain and absence of parental support. Zhao et al. (2022) showed that the emotional wellbeing of migrant parents, often challenged by stress and isolation, negatively impacted their parenting, resulting in higher neglect rates.

Henschel et al. (2022) in Germany investigated the impacts of parental stress and emotional wellbeing on child neglect. Their research showed that parents who were emotionally disturbed and stressed were less capable of meeting their children's needs, leading to neglect.

Studies by Bauer & Weber (2022) showed that emotional support programs for parents significantly reduced neglect rates, demonstrating the effectiveness of emotional wellbeing interventions.

Olusanya & Alabi (2023) in Nigeria examined the effects of emotional wellbeing on child neglect in economically disadvantaged families. They found that parents undergoing high emotional stress and poor mental health were likely to neglect their children. Amusa & Oyedeji (2023) showed that emotional strain, often linked to economic hardships, contributed to child neglect in rural Nigerian communities, emphasizing the need for comprehensive support systems.

Namara & Mugisha (2023) in Uganda investigated the relationship between parental emotional wellbeing and child neglect. Their findings showed that low levels of emotional wellbeing among parents, characterized by high stress and poor mental health, were associated with increased neglect. Okello & Nsubuga (2023) reported that emotional support and counseling services for parents in rural Ugandan communities assisted to reduce child neglect rates, showing the importance of addressing emotional wellbeing in prevention efforts.

Vanderminde & Esala (2023) in the United States examined the impacts of emotional stress and mental health on child neglect, showing that parents from low-income families were affected by emotional stress, leading to neglectful conditions. Their findings were in line with those of Font & Berger (2023), who conducted a longitudinal study on the long-term impacts of parental emotional health on child neglect, showing that persistent emotional challenges significantly increased the risk of neglect over time.

Kim et al. (2024) in South Korea explored the relationship between emotional stress and child neglect, finding that families experiencing high levels of emotional strain were likely to engage in neglectful behaviors because of lack of emotional resources. Lee and Choi (2024) investigated the role of emotional support programs in mitigating child neglect in emotionally distressed families, concluding that enhanced emotional support significantly reduced neglect rates.

2.7 Summary and literature gap

The empirical review shows a strong relationship between emotional wellbeing and child neglect, with numerous studies highlighting that poor parental mental health, high stress levels, and family discord significantly contribute to neglectful behaviors. Research across various countries, including the United States, South Korea, China, Germany, Nigeria, and Uganda, shows that emotional distress among parents leads to increased incidences of neglect, whereas interventions aimed at improving emotional wellbeing reduce neglect rates. However, despite these findings, there remains a notable gap in localized research specifically addressing the interplay between

different dimensions of emotional wellbeing and child neglect within specific contexts such as Mukono Town Council, Mukono District. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a nuanced understanding of how various aspects of emotional wellbeing within families in this region impact child neglect, thereby informing more targeted and effective intervention strategies.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The methods for performing the research are presented in this chapter. It showed the methodology for this investigation. It covers the study design, the study location, the data sources, the study population, and the choice of the sample size. It includes sampling methodologies, study variables, data gathering methods and tools, validity and reliability of data collection equipment, quality control measures, data ethical considerations, a strategy for results dissemination, and the study's constraints.

3.1 Research design

This study was carried out using a cross-sectional survey research design. A cross-sectional survey research design includes collecting data at a single point in time from a group of participants to examine the relationships between variables or to describe characteristics of a population (Wang & Cheng, 2020). In the context of this study on the impact of family wellbeing on neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council, this design allowed the researcher to gather quantitative data from a representative sample of households within the area. By administering questionnaires to selected households, the researcher assessed the extent and the effect of family wellbeing on neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents. The cross-sectional nature of the survey design enabled the researcher to capture a shot of the current situation, providing valuable insights into the prevalence and correlates of child neglect patterns within the community (Pieper et al., 2021).

The researcher incorporated qualitative methods with the help of in-depth interviews with local leaders and the probation officer to enrich the understanding of the complex dynamics underlying family wellbeing and its impacts on child neglect (Timans et al., 2019). Qualitative data obtained from these key stakeholders offered distinct perspectives, contextual insights, and lived experiences that complement and enhance the quantitative findings. Integrating both quantitative and qualitative

approaches provided a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the phenomenon, allowing for triangulation of data sources and validation of findings. Ultimately, this mixed-methods approach strengthened the rigor and credibility of the study, enabling the researcher to draw meaningful sum ups and implications for policy and practice aimed at addressing the effect of family wellbeing on neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council (Dawadi et al., 2021).

3.2 Study area and population

The study was conducted in Mukono Town Council located in Mukono Municipality, Mukono district. Mukono Town Council was chosen because it is among the areas in the district that has registered high cases of child neglect among the 3001 reported cases of child neglect in 2023 by the probation officer at the district local government.

According to statistics from the LC1 Chairmen of villages within Mukono Town Council, there is a total of 550 registered families that are blended and these were considered in this study as the study population. The study population also included key informants who included; the Probation Officer, local leaders like the LC1 chairman and local councilor plus the social workers working with Mukono Municipal Council totaling to 5.

3.3 Sample size determination

Singh, (2007) defined sample size as finite part of a statistical population whose properties are used to make estimates about a population as a whole. For this research study, a cross section of individuals was selected to draw research responses that gave a true picture of the research phenomena.

Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) state that in order to arrive at a reasonable, reliable and valid sample size, take 10% of the accessible population if the population is large and 30% if the population is small. Based on these authorities, sample size for this study was 55 blended families which was constituted as follows; by getting 10% (55) of

total population of blended families in Mukono Town Council; $(10/100 \times 550 = 55)$. This gave a sample size of 55 blended families in Mukono Town Council.

Therefore from the sample size calculation above, the sample size was 55 blended families in Mukono Town Council. This therefore means that the unit of analysis in this study was the selected blended families, whereas the unit of inquiry was the teenagers aged 12-18 years from these selected blended families. This implies that each blended family was represented by one teenager aged 12-18 years. The population and sample size for the blended families in Mukono Town Council and the key informants were further divided in the table below.

Table 1: Population, sample size and sampling methods

Categories of respondents	Sample size	Sampling method
Teenagers aged 12-18 years from selected blended families in Mukono Town Council	55	Simple random sampling
Probation Officer	1	Purposive sampling
Local Leader i.e. LC1 Chairman	1	Purposive sampling
Local councilor	1	Purposive sampling
Social workers working with Mukono Municipal Council	2	Purposive sampling
TOTAL	60	

Source: *Mukono Town Council (2024)*

3.4 Sampling techniques and procedure

A total of 55 teenagers aged 12-18 years from selected blended families in Mukono Town Council were selected using simple random sampling where samples were randomly selected from these teenagers. These were determined and selected randomly by use of the records from the village chairman and Mukono Town Council and later contacted for their consent. Simple random sampling was used because it ensures fairness and minimizes bias in the selection process, allowing for a representative sample of the teenagers to participate in the study (Noor et al., 2022).

Furthermore, a total of 5 key informants who are; the Probation Officer, Local Leaders (LC1 and local councilor), and the social workers were selected using purposive sampling. The key informants were purposively selected on the basis that they are the ones that deal with cases of child neglect that happen in families and further devise solutions to help these children and their families. Therefore, purposive sampling was used to select this category of people because they are few in number and they have the expertise and the knowledge concerning the topic under study.

3.5 Data collection methods

3.5.1 Questionnaires

A set of questions developed by the researcher with the goal of obtaining data is called a questionnaire survey (Katamba & Nsubuga, 2014). Open-ended questions in the survey require the respondent to supply more details about the topic and hence they give respondents the chance to express their opinions in a free-flowing manner and prevent personal contact, they give respondents time to consider their responses before responding. Respondents only needed to check the box next to the best response that fits the topic when answering semi-structured or closed-ended questions with provided answers. The researcher was involved in directing the respondents to ensure that the appropriate data was gathered from the teenagers aged 12-18 years from selected blended families in Mukono TC because she was using questionnaires.

3.5.2 Key Informant Interviews

Face-to-face interviews with the Probation Officer, Local Leaders (LC1 and local councilor), and the social workers were conducted using key informant interviews. To get in-depth information from the key informants, an unstructured informant interview guide was employed as a tool. The interview guide provided a summary of current events and questions that were investigated during the interviews. The questions in the guide were designed to elicit opinions regarding the topic under

study. Key informant interviews were used because they offer detailed information that may not be possible to gather when utilizing a questionnaire, as recommended by (Mugenda, 2003).

3.6 Data collection tools

The study employed two different kinds of data collection tools. They comprised interview and questionnaire guides, which were briefly detailed in the subsection that follows.

3.6.1 Questionnaire guide

Here, a questionnaire was used to gather data. The chosen population was polled using questionnaires to gather quantitative data from the teenagers aged 12-18 years from selected blended families in Mukono Town Council. To save time as there are a lot of respondents in this group who needed to be interviewed, questionnaire guides was employed. The typical survey asks respondents to choose the response that best fits the circumstance from a range of potential answers. For each of the three objectives, a closed-ended question was included in the survey, and the respondents were asked to tick the best since a Likert scale of 5 was used where; 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (not sure), 2 (disagree) and 1 (strongly disagree).

3.6.2 Key informant interview (KII) guide

This instrument was used to collect data on topics that were not immediately visible and were helpful for the research problem, which was only identified based on the respondents' answers. Also, the research had control over the course of inquiry, which was advantageous and save time. The information gathered during the interview will enhance the information gathered through the questionnaire. The key informants will be subjected to interviews and these are; the Probation Officer, Local Leaders (LC1 and local councilors), and the social workers who were purposively selected since they are the ones that deal with cases of child neglect that happen in families and further devise solutions to help these children and their families.

3.7 Validity and reliability

Fundamental tenets of the scientific process include the concepts of validity and reliability (Kent, 2001). Evaluations must be free of bias and distortion in order to be considered sound. To define and quantify bias and distortion, it is crucial to understand the notions of reliability and validity. How validity and reliability was assessed in this study is described in the following subsections.

3.7.1 Validity and reliability of quantitative research

The validity question was ensured, through constant consultations, assessment and guidance from a number of progressive experienced research mentors and research supervisor who is a PhD holder under social sciences. The results of the survey were used to inform the development of new ways to deal with children of incarcerated parents. Further for scientific formalities of research, the validity of the research instrument was determined through the calculation of a Content Validity Index (CVI). The researcher applied the formula as of (Cohen et al., 2007) which implies that high content validity is an indicator that the test fully covers the topic variables for the targeted audience, and low results lower than 0.07 suggest that the test doesn't contain relevant facets in test. Therefore for scientific purposes, below is a formula to determine the validity of the study tools.

Content validity Index (CVI) = $\frac{\text{Relevant items by all judges as suitable}}{\text{Total number of items judged.}}$

Total number of items judged.

The validity of the questionnaire for data collection was implied when the CVI was equal to or higher than the advised 0.70 (Kent, 2001).

On the other hand, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to gauge how reliable the questionnaire instrument is (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was used to conduct a pilot research with 10 respondents and to compute the reliability results (SPSS). Calculating the Cronbach's coefficient alpha was done using the formula below.

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{K-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum SDi^2}{\sum SDt^2} \right)$$

Where α = coefficient alpha

$\sum SDi^2$ = sum variance of items

$\sum SDt^2$ = sum variance of scale

The questionnaire was appropriate for data collection if the coefficient was at or above the advised level of .70 (Amin, 2005).

3.7.2 Validity and reliability of qualitative research

The validity of the study may be impacted by the researcher's poor memory in qualitative research. The researcher was therefore taking notes throughout the interviews in order to minimize this issue. The researcher assembled interview data right after the interviews and turned it into valuable information. To check if she correctly read the respondents' responses, the researcher also showed her findings to the participants. The validity of the findings was also addressed with the researcher's supervisor along with insightful criticism.

Triangulation: In order to gain a deeper understanding of the subject under investigation, triangulation is a strategy that integrates many approaches, theories, or data sources (Bilandzic, 2008; Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2005). By integrating ideas, procedures, or observers, triangulation increases the validity and credibility of a research investigation. This made it easier to prevent the underlying biases brought on by the employment of a single method. By utilizing a variety of methods, triangulation is also utilized to assess the consistency of the findings and provides more opportunity to assess various factors influencing the study's conclusions. Furthermore, it is utilized to elucidate increasingly intricate human conduct (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2018). To guarantee the efficacy of the data triangulation she employed in this study, the researcher classified the respondents she was looking at.

After that, the researcher included a similar number of group members in the evaluation study.

Reliability: This was gauged by repeating the experiment to determine if the same outcomes were attained. The researcher was not able to conduct the study more than once due to a shortage of time. As a result, it was probably challenging to draw any judgments about the validity of this study.

3.8 Procedure of data collection

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the School of Social Sciences in Uganda Christian University, after which she sought for permission from management of MDLG and the LC1 Chairman to use as a case study. The researcher then approached various respondents to conduct interviews and distribute the questionnaires after the respondents had consented.

3.9 Data analysis

Data analysis is the act of converting raw data into usable information, usually provided in the form of a published analytical piece, in order to increase the value of the statistical output (Amin, 2005). Two distinct analyses—one quantitative and one qualitative—were carried out. The following subsections provided a detailed explanation of the analyses.

3.9.1 Analysis of quantitative data

This was done through classification of respondents into categories called codes. It involved sorting, editing questionnaires and coding responses after which data was tabulated and analyzed using a computer program known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. It was used because it provides a wide range of tools from basic tabulation to sophisticated multivariate analysis. It is wildly used to analyze quantitative data, meaning that data in form of tables and figures. It is also commonly used in both academic and commercial spheres (Mubazi, 2008). This software was also used by the researcher because it saves time of analyzing and it

interprets complicated figures. The process of data processing involved editing in order to check for errors and omissions, coding were employed to reduce the data to a meaningful pattern of responses and tabulation of the findings was done in order to prepare data, analyze and compile the research report.

Data editing: This requires the researcher to edit the data by examining the collected raw data to detect errors and omissions. Therefore, the researcher undertook careful scrutiny of the completed questionnaires. Editing was of help to ensure that the data is accurate, consistent with other facts gathered, uniformly entered, and well arranged to facilitate coding and tabulation.

Coding refers to the process of assigning numerals or other symbols to answers so that responses can be put into a limited number of categories or classes. The researcher ensured exhaustiveness and mutual exclusiveness (a specific answer is placed in only one cell in a given category set). Coding was necessary for the efficient analysis, as several replies were reduced to a small number of classes, which contained critical information required for analysis.

3.9.2 Analysis of qualitative data

To create relevant phrases, qualitative data was altered and rearranged. In order to identify themes, categories, and patterns, a thematic method was utilized to evaluate qualitative data. The findings were presented together with a few direct quotations from participants to provide examples of the recurring themes that were identified in relation to each of the interview's guiding questions.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The researcher sought ethical clearance from the School of Social Sciences. However, administrative approvals were obtained from the management of MDLG and the LC1 Chairman of Bugujju. Informed consent was obtained from respondents after explaining adequately the aim, procedures and anticipated benefits of the study. It was also explained to the study participants that their participation was voluntary with no payment involved and they were free to withdraw consent at any time during

the study. Finally, confidentiality where the information got from the field was only used for academic purposes.

3.11 Limitations and delimitation

First and foremost, the research tools developed by the researcher were not standard. Hence, in order to create a reliable assessment of the research variables, a validity and reliability test was performed.

Second, when research assistants were used, there were inconsistencies in the way questionnaires are administered in terms of timing, comprehension of the questions asked, and justifications given to the respondents. To lessen this concern, the research assistants got training and instruction on the protocols to be followed in data collecting.

Finally, not every survey was finished or even returned because of responder circumstances like illness, travel, hospitalization, and refusal or withdrawal from participation. The researcher set aside additional responders by using a larger sample size in anticipation of this. In addition, the replies were reminded not to leave any questions unanswered, and the date of retrieval was strictly monitored.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the results of analysis that has been done to look at the specific objectives of the study and in relation to the reviewed literature with the help of tables. The study was carried out using questionnaire with selected teenagers/ adolescents aged 12-18 years from selected heads of blended families in Mukono Town Council plus interviews with key informants who are the Probation Officer, LC1 chairman, local councilor & social workers.

4.1 Response rate

Table 2: Response rate for questionnaires

Response Rate	Sample Size	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Response	50	90.9%
Non Response	5	9.1%
Expected Response	55	100.0%

Source:*Primary data*

According to table 2 above a total of 55 (100%) respondents who are teenagers/ adolescents aged 12-18 years from selected heads of blended families in Mukono Town Council were expected to respond to the questionnaires, however, 50 (90.9%) responded to the questionnaires leaving out 5 (9.1%). According to Ahuja (2009), a response rate of 70% is excellent, 60% is good and 50% is adequate for analysis. Thus the response rate of 90.9% was considered reliable and appropriate for the study. The reason as to why the researcher was unable to collect from the one of the respondents was because there was limited time to collect data since the researcher had to beat the deadline of dissertation submission yet some of these respondents were delaying to give response.

4.2 Findings on demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presents the general background information about the respondents in relation to their gender, age and level of education as shown in the table below;

4.2.1 Gender of the respondents

Table 3: Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	21	42.0	42.0
Female	29	58.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Findings in table 3 indicates that the majority of the respondents who are the selected teenagers are female represented by 58.0%, whereas the males make up 42.0% of the respondents. This gender distribution shows that there were more female adolescents than male adolescents involved in the study. This implies that any intervention programs or policies aimed at addressing family wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families within Mukono Town Council need to consider the higher representation of females. This could mean tailoring specific support services or resources to address the unique needs and challenges that may be more prevalent among female adolescents in these family settings.

4.2.2 Age of the respondents

Table 4: Age

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
12-14 years	13	26.0	26.0
15-16 years	20	40.0	66.0

17-18 years	17	34.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	

Source: *Primary data*

Findings in table 4 above show that the largest proportion of respondents among the selected teenagers are within the age group of 15-16 years, making up 40.0% of the total sample. This is followed by those aged 17-18 years, who represent 34.0% of the respondents. The smallest group is the 12-14 years age range, accounting for 26.0% of the sample. This shows that interventions and programs concentrating on family wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families should focus more on the mid-adolescent age group (15-16 years), as they constitute the majority. It is also important to ensure that the particular needs and challenges of younger and older adolescents are communicated to provide comprehensive support across all age groups.

4.2.3 Education level of the respondents

Table 5: Level of education

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary	18	36.0	36.0
Secondary	22	44.0	80.0
Tertiary	7	14.0	94.0
No education	3	6.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	

Source: *Primary data*

Findings in the table 5 above revealed that the highest percentage of respondents among the selected teenagers are at the secondary education level, comprising 44.0% of the total sample. This is followed by those at the primary education level, making up 36.0% of the respondents, followed by 14.0% who are at the tertiary education level, while 6.0% have no education background. This implies that the majority of

adolescents in blended families are engaged in formal education, primarily at the secondary level. This suggests that any initiatives aimed at improving family wellbeing and addressing neglect patterns should include educational support and resources, particularly for those in secondary education. Additionally, attention should be given to those with no education and those in primary and tertiary levels to ensure inclusive and holistic support that addresses the varying educational needs within this demographic.

4.3 To Establish the relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council

Table 6 summarizes respondents' responses, the first specific objective of this study was to establish relationship between economic well being of the family and neglect patterns in blends among adolescents in Mukono Town Council. To achieve this objective the response on questions items that asked the respondents to indicate the perceived, desired and actual importance of establishing relationship between the economic well being of the family and neglect patterns in blends among adolescents in Mukono Town Council. The desired level of economic well-being was defined using the question whether the adolescents' families have always had enough money to buy food and other necessities. In the figure 2 below it is evident that 72% of the adolescents' families have always had enough money to buy food and other necessities. The actual relationship between the economic well being of the family 20% of the adolescents reported to have difficulties in having enough money to buy food and other necessities. However , it should be noted that the actual relationship of the economic well being is reported less than the desired level of family well being . The fact that the concerns and difficulties for which adolescents had to indicate reduced the subject of indicating strong agree, agree, disagree, strong disagree and not sure without thinking about problems that motivated the establishment of the relationship between the economic well-being of the family and neglect patterns in blends among adolescents in Mukono Town Council. The relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in Mukono Town Council by using a Likert

scale where SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), NS (Not Sure), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

Table 6: Economic wellbeing of the family

Statements	Extent of agreement and disagreement				
	SA	A	NS	D	SDA
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
My family always has enough money to buy food and other necessities.	36 72.0%	4 8.0%	00	10 20.0%	00
I can participate in school trips and activities because my family can afford it.	32 64.0%	7 14.0%	4 8.0%	4 8.0%	3 6.0%
My family can afford to pay for my school fees without difficulties.	20 40.0%	20 40.0%	00	7 14.0%	3 6.0%
I have all the school supplies and clothes I need.	8 16.0%	28 56.0%	7 14.0%	3 6.0%	4 8.0%
We do not worry about paying for medical expenses.	24 48.0%	22 44.0%	00	4 8.0%	00
My home is comfortable and meets my basic living needs.	12 24.0%	23 46.0%	00	12 24.0%	3 6.0%

Source:Primary data

According to the study in table 6 above, majority of the respondents who are the selected teenagers/ adolescents aged 12-18 years from selected heads of blended families in Mukono Town Council represented by 80% strongly agreed and agreed that their families have enough money to buy food and other necessities, where 20% disagreed with the statement put across. This implies that the majority of adolescents in blended families feel economically secure in terms of basic needs, which is crucial for their overall well-being and development.

The findings of the study revealed that 78% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they can engage in school trips and activities because of their family's

financial capacity, 8% of the respondents were not sure, while 14% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement put forward. This proposes that while many adolescents have the financial support for extracurricular activities, a significant minority might be missing out on such opportunities, which is affecting their social integration and enrichment.

The results from the above table indicate that 80% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their families can afford to pay for their school fees without challenges. Whereas 20% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement shown. This means that most adolescents feel secure regarding their education expenses, which is important for academic stability and progression.

The findings show that 72% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they have all the school supplies and clothes, 14% were not sure, while 14% of the respondents also disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement put across. This shows that while a majority feel provided for, there is still a notable portion that may lack important items, affecting their academic performance and self-esteem.

The study findings showed that 92% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they do not worry about paying for medical expenses, while 8% of the respondents disagreed with the statements addressed. This means a high level of financial security regarding healthcare, which is important for the physical and mental well-being of adolescents in blended families.

According to findings in the table above, 70% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their homes are comfortable and provide their basic needs, while 30% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement put forward. This suggests that while most adolescents feel their living conditions are adequate, there is still a big number that may face problems in their living environment, which could impact their overall well-being.

Findings show a positive perception of economic wellbeing within adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council, with most respondents feeling secure in

terms of basic needs, education expenses, and healthcare. Although, the presence of challenges and disagreements show areas where economic support could be improved to make sure that all adolescents have equal opportunities for growth and development. Communicating these economic challenges is important for reducing neglect patterns and improving a stable and nurturing environment in blended families. The findings of the study concerning the relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council were further determined using Pearson’s correlation that was conducted as shown below;

Table 7: Pearson’s correlation on economic wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families

		Correlations	
		Economic well-being	Neglect patterns in blends
Economic well-being	Pearson Correlation	1	.754**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
Neglect patterns in blends	Pearson Correlation	.754**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

The findings indicated in table above shows that there is a significant positive relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council. This relationship is affirmed by r-values of 0.754** with significant p-values of 0.000 at the level of 0.05 (2-tailed) ($r = .754^{**}, p < .05$). This implies that better economic wellbeing is strongly associated with lower neglect patterns among adolescents, indicating that financial stability is crucial for reducing neglect in these families.

4.3.1 To establish the relationship between economic wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families

From the interviews conducted with the Probation Officer, LC1 chairman, local councilor & social workers, they were asked for their views on the relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council and their responses were as follows;

The key informants generally agreed that there is a strong relationship between the economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council. They noted that families with better off economic stability always provide more for their children, making sure that their basic needs, like food, clothing, education, and healthcare, are met. This provision reduces neglect as parents are able to spend more time and resources on their children's well-being. Economically strained families usually struggle to provide these basic needs, resulting to higher instances of neglect. Adolescents in such families might be left to take care of themselves, leading to low proper supervision and care.

The informants also addressed that economic challenges can rise with stress in blended families, resulting to conflicts and neglect. They mentioned that financial challenges usually force parents to work for longer hours or multiple jobs, leading to little time for family interactions and emotional support. This absence can lead to adolescents feeling neglected both physically and emotionally. Economic hardships can tire relationships between step-parents and step-children, as less resources can result into favoritism. The key informants mentioned that improving the economic wellbeing of families is important to reducing neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families. Some of the key informants said as mentioned below;

“.....When families have enough sources of finances, they can afford to care for their children properly, reducing the risk of neglect.....” **Local Councilor**

“.....I think that economic challenges force parents to prioritize work over family time, resulting to emotional and physical neglect of adolescents.....”

Social Worker

*“.....Children often experience unmet needs due to low levels of income which also results into attaining poor education which is offered in rural areas.....”*A parent

4.4 Determining the relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council

Table 8 summarizes respondents’ responses on the relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council by using a Likert scale where SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), NS (Not Sure), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

Table 8: Social wellbeing of the family

Statements	Extent of agreement and disagreement				
	SA	A	NS	D	SD
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
I have a good relationship with all my step-siblings.	24 48.0%	12 24.0%	3 6.0%	7 14.0%	4 8.0%
We often do fun activities together as a family.	8 16.0%	31 62.0%	4 8.0%	7 14.0%	00
I feel supported by my extended family members (grandparents, aunts, uncles).	16 32.0%	24 48.0%	00	00	10 20.0%
My family participates in community events and social activities.	28 56.0%	11 22.0%	4 8.0%	4 8.0%	3 6.0%
I feel accepted by my friends and community as part of a blended family.	20 40.0%	20 40.0%	00	7 14.0%	3 6.0%

My family receives help from community organizations when needed.	8 16.0%	28 56.0%	7 14.0%	3 6.0%	4 8.0%
---	------------	-------------	------------	-----------	-----------

Source: Primary data

According to table 8 above, majority of the respondents who are the selected teenagers/ adolescents aged 12-18 years from selected heads of blended families in Mukono Town Council represented by 72% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they have a good relationship with their step-siblings, 6% were not sure, whereas 22% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement put across. This implies that the majority of adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council experience positive relationships with their step-siblings, which is crucial for family cohesion and emotional well-being. However, the significant minority who disagree suggests that there are still challenges in achieving harmonious step-sibling relationships in some families.

The findings also showed that 78% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they usually do fun activities together as a family, 8% were not sure, whereas 14% disagreed with the statement addressed. This shows that many families participate in bonding activities, which can improve family unity and provide emotional support for adolescents. The few who do not participate in such activities may miss out on these advantages, leading to their social unwell-being.

80% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they feel supported by extended family members, while 20% strongly disagreed with the statement shown. This shows that most adolescents get help from a bigger support network beyond their immediate family, which calls able to provide additional emotional and social resources. The few who feel not supported shows a gap in extended family engagement that could be communicated to improve adolescent well-being.

78% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their families participate in community events and social activities, 8% were not sure, whereas 14% disagreed and strongly disagree with the statement put across. This shows that most families are socially active, which can improve social integration and support networks for

adolescents. The few who do not participate in these activities may feel isolated, which could affect their social development negatively.

80% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they feel accepted by their friends and community as part of a blended family, where 20% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement put addressed. This communicates that most adolescents feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, which is important for their social identity and confidence. The notable proportion of those who do not feel accepted may experience social exclusion, affecting their self-esteem and well-being.

Lastly, 72% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their families receive help from community organizations when needed, 14% were not sure, whereas 14% of the respondents also disagreed with the statement put forward. This implies that most families have access to external support, which can be crucial in times of need. However, the minority who do not receive such help indicate a gap in community support services, which could be addressed to ensure all families can access necessary resources.

The findings show a positive perception of social well-being among adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council, with most respondents feeling supported by their family, extended family, and community. Although the presence of challenges and disagreements shows areas where social support could be enhanced to ensure that all adolescents have equal opportunities for emotional and social development. Addressing these social disparities is crucial for reducing neglect patterns and promoting a stable and nurturing environment in blended families. The findings of the study concerning the relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council were further determined using Pearson's correlation that was conducted as shown below;

Table 9: Pearson’s correlation on social wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families

		Correlations	
		Social well-being	Neglect patterns in blends
Social well-being	Pearson Correlation	1	.733**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
Neglect patterns in blends	Pearson Correlation	.733**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: *Primary data*

The findings indicated in table above shows that there is a significant positive relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council. This relationship is affirmed by r-values of 0.733** with significant p-values of 0.000 at the level of 0.05 (2-tailed) ($r = .733^{**}, p < .05$). This strongly addresses the importance of encouraging strong social support and connections within families to reduce neglect and improve adolescent well-being.

4.4.1 To determine the relationship between social wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families

From the interviews conducted with the Probation Officer, LC1 chairman, local councilor & social workers, they were asked about their thoughts on the relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council and their responses were as follows;

The key informants mentioned that social well-being plays an important role in determining neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families. They addressed that families with strong social bonds and supportive relationships usually have lower chances of neglect. They also mentioned that when family members participate in

regular activities together and maintain open communication, adolescents feel more valued and supported. This togetherness helps to create a nurturing environment where the needs of all family members, particularly adolescents, are met, thereby reducing neglect.

The key informants addressed the role of extended family and community participation in improving social well-being. They mentioned that adolescents who feel supported not just by their immediate family but also by extended family members and community organizations are less likely to undergo neglect. Community events and activities were mentioned as important events for fostering social connections and support networks. This communal support structure helps to remove some of the pressures on blended families, making sure that adolescents receive the care and attention they need. Some of the key informants had this to say,

“.....When families make an effort to spend time together and engage in communal activities, it significantly reduces the likelihood of adolescents feeling neglected.....” (KI LC1 Chairman)

“.....Support from extended family and community organizations is essential in ensuring that adolescents in blended families do not fall through the cracks.....” (KI Social Worker)

4.5 Investigating the relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council

Table 8 summarizes respondents’ responses on the relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council by using a Likert scale where SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), NS (Not Sure), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

Table 10: Emotional wellbeing of the family

Statements	Extent of agreement and disagreement				
	SA	A	NS	D	SDA

	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
I feel loved and valued by all my parents and step-parents.	36 72.0%	4 8.0%	00	10 20.0%	00
We talk openly about our feelings in my family.	32 64.0%	7 14.0%	4 8.0%	4 8.0%	3 6.0%
Conflicts in my family are resolved in a positive way.	20 40.0%	20 40.0%	00	7 14.0%	3 6.0%
I feel comfortable expressing my emotions to my family members.	8 16.0%	28 56.0%	7 14.0%	3 6.0%	4 8.0%
My parents and step-parents listen to my problems and concerns.	24 48.0%	22 44.0%	00	4 8.0%	00
I feel emotionally supported by my family.	8 16.0%	23 46.0%	12 24.0%	3 6.0%	4 8.0%

Source:*Primary data*

According to table 10 above, majority of the respondents who are the selected teenagers/ adolescents aged 12-18 years from selected heads of blended families in Mukono Town Council represented by 80% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they feel loved and valued by all their parents and step-parents, whereas 20% of the respondents disagreed with the statement put across. This suggests that the majority of adolescents in blended families experience a strong sense of affection and appreciation from their family members, which is essential for their emotional stability and reduces the likelihood of neglect.

The findings also revealed that 78% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they talk openly about their feelings within their families, 8% of the respondents were not sure, whereas 14% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement put forward. This indicates that open communication about emotions is prevalent, which helps in addressing any emotional issues and fostering a supportive environment, thereby mitigating potential neglect.

Furthermore, 80% of respondents felt that conflicts in their families are resolved positively, whereas 20% of the respondents also disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement put forward. This implies that while most families manage conflicts constructively, there is still a notable proportion that may experience unresolved issues, potentially affecting their emotional well-being and increasing neglect risks.

More so, 72% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel comfortable expressing their emotions to their family members, with 14% disagreeing and strongly disagreeing with the statement. This indicates that most adolescents feel safe sharing their emotions, which is important for emotional health but highlights a minority who may struggle with emotional expression, possibly leading to neglect.

In addition, 92% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their parents and step-parents listen to their problems and concerns, whereas 8% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement put across. This suggests a high level of attentiveness and support from family members, which is crucial for emotional well-being and can prevent feelings of neglect among adolescents.

Lastly, 62% of respondents felt that they are emotionally supported by their family, 24% of the respondents were not sure, whereas 14% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement put across. This suggests that emotional support is generally available but may not be consistent for all adolescents, which could impact their overall emotional well-being and susceptibility to neglect.

Overall, the findings show that emotional well-being is strong among adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council, with high levels of perceived love, communication, and support. However, the presence of some negative responses indicates areas where improvements could be made to ensure all adolescents receive the emotional support they need and reduce neglect patterns. The findings of the study concerning the relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council were further determined using Pearson's correlation that was conducted as shown below;

Table 11: Pearson’s correlation on emotional wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families

		Correlations	
		Emotional well-being	Neglect patterns in blends
Emotional well-being	Pearson Correlation	1	.717**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
Neglect patterns in blends	Pearson Correlation	.717**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: *Primary data*

The findings indicated in table above shows that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council. This relationship is affirmed by r-values of 0.717** with significant p-values of 0.000 at the level of 0.05 (2-tailed) ($r = .717^{**}, p < .05$). This shows that as emotional well-being improves, the likelihood of neglect among adolescents mitigates, showing the role of emotional support in reducing neglect in blended families.

4.5.1 To investigate the relationship between emotional wellbeing and neglect patterns in blended families

From the interviews conducted with the Probation Officer, LC1 chairman, local councilor & social workers, they were asked for their thoughts on the relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council and their responses were as follows;

Key informants from various roles in Mukono Town Council focused attention on the significant effect of emotional well-being on neglect patterns in blended families. They addressed that families with strong emotional connections and open communication are less likely to undergo neglect issues. When family members are emotionally supportive and actively participate in communicating each other's feelings and concerns, adolescents in blended families usually to feel more secure and valued. This emotional stability helps in reducing neglect, as emotionally well families are better equipped to handle the challenges of blending family dynamics and provide a nurturing environment for adolescents.

The informants observed that families struggling with emotional well-being often face increased neglect. When family members do not communicate effectively or fail to support one another emotionally, adolescents may feel neglected and isolated. Such environments can exacerbate neglect patterns as the lack of emotional support leaves gaps in the care and attention adolescents require. The correlation between emotional well-being and neglect patterns underscores the importance of fostering emotional health within families to prevent neglect and support adolescent development. Some of the key informants had this to say,

“....When families have strong emotional bonds and support each other, adolescents are less likely to experience neglect. Emotional well-being creates a foundation of care that prevents many issues associated with blended family dynamics (...KII LC1 Chairman)

“.....Families with poor emotional health often struggle with neglect. Without open communication and emotional support, adolescents in blended families are more vulnerable to feeling neglected and isolated.....” (KII Social Worker)

“Children whose parents have low levels of income often experience unmet basic needs which may seem as neglect from their parents due to low levels of income thus engaging in bad behavior to accommodate themselves with these unmet needs like theft....”KII A parent)

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This study focused on three objectives including i) to establish the relationship between wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends among adolescents in Mukono Town Council , ii) to determine the relationship between social well-being of the family and neglect patterns in blends among adolescents in Mukono Gown Council and iii) to investigate the relationship between emotional well-being of the family and neglect patterns in blends among adolescents in Mukono Town Council. The findings are discussed according to the objectives of the study and details are presented below

5.1 Discussion of findings

5.1.1 To establish the relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends among adolescents in Mukono Town Council

The study findings revealed a strong positive relationship between the economic well-being of families and neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .754^{**}$ ($p < .05$). This indicates that families with greater economic stability are less likely to experience neglect, as they can more effectively meet their children's basic needs such as food, education, and healthcare. The findings align with Avdibegović & Brkić (2020), who found that economic hardships are a significant predictor of child neglect, as financial challenge affects a family's ability to provide necessary resources and supervision for their children. Their research shows that economic challenges usually lead to increased neglect, which supports the observed relationship in this study.

The study also showed that families facing financial challenges struggle to provide essential necessities, resulting to higher chances of neglect and reduced supervision.

This observation goes hand in hand with the findings of Featherstone et al. (2019), who discussed how poverty and inequality increase child abuse and neglect. They addressed that financial difficulties bring about a stressful family environment, which can spoil parenting practices and increase neglect patterns. This stress and conflict resulting from economic pressures are consistent with the study's findings, emphasizing the need for financial stability to mitigate neglect.

The study showed that economic challenges can increase family stress and conflict, rising neglect due to diminished time and emotional support. This finding is consistent with the work of Nabayinda et al. (2023), who examined the relationship between family togetherness and behavioral challenges among children. Their research demonstrated that financial strain impacts family dynamics negatively, which can increase neglect. The study emphasizes the importance of addressing economic stressors to improve family functioning and reduce neglect.

The study's results show the necessity of improving economic conditions to provide a supportive environment for adolescents in blended families. This is in line with Hecker et al. (2019), who wrote that better economic resources bring about reduced emotional and behavioral problems in children, as families are better equipped to offer support and address emotional needs. The study's findings strengthened the idea that improving economic well-being is crucial for reducing neglect and promoting positive outcomes for adolescents in blended families.

5.1.2 To establish relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends among adolescents in Mukono Town Council

The study findings showed a strong positive relationship between the social well-being of families and neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .733^{**}$ ($p < .05$). This shows that adolescents who experience positive social charting in their families, including good relationships with step-siblings and participation in family and community activities, report lower levels of neglect. These results align with the work of Greene, Haisley et al. (2020), who looked at the intergenerational impacts of childhood maltreatment

and found that supportive family and social environments contribute to reducing neglect and promoting positive results in children.

The study highlighted that support from extended family and community organizations enhances emotional and practical assistance, thereby reducing neglect. This finding is consistent with the research by Featherstone et al. (2019), who emphasized the role of community and extended family support in reducing child abuse and neglect. Their study strengthens how comprehensive social support systems, including extended family networks, can provide important resources and emotional support that help prevent neglect.

The study found that failure in social support and engagement lead to increased neglect. This observation is in line with the findings of Avdibegović & Brkić (2020), who discussed the results of less social support on child neglect. Their research shows that a lack of social and community support rises neglect, as families encountering isolation or less assistance struggle to access their children's needs effectively. The current study reinforces this notion by showing that insufficient social support and weak family connections are linked to higher levels of neglect.

The study strengthens the importance of forming strong social networks and family togetherness to reduce neglect. This is supported by the research of Turner et al. (2019), who showed the broader context of child victimization and the importance of family support in reducing neglect. Their findings suggest that improving family togetherness and building social networks are important strategies for preventing neglect and improving adolescent well-being. The current study supports this view by showing that positive social interactions and strong support systems are important for reducing neglect in blended families.

5.1.3 To investigate the relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council

The study findings showed a strong positive relationship between the emotional well-being of families and neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families in

Mukono Town Council ($r = .717^{**}$, $p < .05$). This shows that adolescents who feel loved, supported, and able to express their emotions encounter lower levels of neglect. This observation aligns with the work of Toth and Manly (2019), who discussed the developmental consequences of child abuse and neglect. Their research underscores the significance of emotional support and family togetherness in preventing neglect and fostering a nurturing environment, as emotional stability within families contributes to reducing neglect and improving overall well-being in children.

The findings showed that high levels of open communication and positive conflict resolution within families contribute to emotional stability, reducing neglect. This finding is consistent with the research by Hecker et al. (2019), which explored the relationship between child neglect and emotional and behavioral problems. Their study strengthens that effective communication and positive conflict resolution are crucial in maintaining emotional well-being and preventing neglect. The current study's results support this by demonstrating that families with strong emotional support systems and effective communication practices experience lower levels of neglect.

Adolescents in blended families lacking emotional togetherness and support were shown to face increased neglect, as highlighted by the study. This observation is consistent with the findings of Avdibegović & Brkić (2020), who examined the causes and effects of child neglect. Their research shows that inadequate emotional support and weak family togetherness brings about higher levels of neglect. The current study reinforces this by showing that emotional instability and lack of support are linked to increased neglect, highlighting the need for enhancing emotional cohesion within families to mitigate neglect.

The study talks about the importance of fostering emotional well-being to prevent neglect and create a supportive environment for adolescents. This aligns with the research by Vanderminden et al. (2019), which investigated the rates of neglect and its impact on children. Their study highlights the critical role of emotional support

and family dynamics in reducing neglect and improving child outcomes. The current study's findings support this by demonstrating that families with strong emotional bonds and supportive interactions experience lower levels of neglect, reinforcing the need for interventions aimed at improving emotional well-being within families

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Summary of findings

The findings show a strong positive relationship between the economic well-being of families and neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council ($r = .754^{**}$, $p < .05$). The findings revealed that families with better economic stability are less likely to experience neglect, as they can more effectively meet their children's basic needs, such as food, education, and healthcare. Families facing financial strain often struggle to provide these necessities, leading to higher instances of neglect and reduced supervision. Economic difficulties can increase family stress and conflict, rising neglect because of diminished time and emotional support. Improving economic conditions is important for reducing neglect and fostering a supportive environment for adolescents in blended families.

The findings show a positive relationship between the social well-being of families and neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council ($r = .733^{**}$, $p < .05$). The findings showed that adolescents who report positive social interactions within their families, including good relationships with step-siblings and engagement in family and community activities, experience less levels of neglect. Support from extended family and community organizations contributes to reduced neglect, as these social supports improve emotional and practical assistance. Difficulties in social support and participation can lead to increased neglect, showing the importance of forming robust social networks and family cohesion to promote adolescent well-being and mitigate neglect.

The findings show a positive relationship between the emotional well-being of families and neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council ($r = .717^{**}$, $p < .05$). The findings showed that adolescents who feel loved, supported, and able to express their emotions experience lower levels of neglect. High levels of open communication and positive conflict resolution within families contribute to this emotional stability, while families with emotional support from parents and step-parents further reduce neglect. Conversely, families lacking emotional cohesion and support face increased neglect, highlighting the crucial role of emotional well-being in preventing neglect and fostering a nurturing environment for adolescents.

6.1 Conclusions

In conclusion, the findings from the study underscore the roles of economic, social, and emotional well-being in influencing neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council. Strong positive relationships were identified between these aspects of well-being and the incidence of neglect, with families demonstrating better economic stability, robust social support, and emotional cohesion experiencing lower levels of neglect. Specifically, economic stability allows families to meet basic needs effectively, while positive social interactions and strong emotional support provides nurturing environment that reduces neglect. Financial strain, poor social support, and emotional instability rise neglect, highlighting the need for comprehensive interventions that address these areas to improve family functioning and adolescent well-being.

6.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been found necessary concerning the effect of family wellbeing on neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents: a case of Mukono Town Council.

The study suggests the need for targeted economic support programs to improve the financial stability of blended families in Mukono Town Council. By improving access to

resources such as food assistance, educational subsidies, and healthcare services, families can better meet their children's basic needs and reduce instances of neglect. Economic stability will also help alleviate family stress and conflict, fostering a more supportive environment for adolescents.

The study recommends the need for strengthening social support networks and community engagement for blended families. Initiatives that promote positive social interactions, such as community activities and family support programs, can enhance social well-being and reduce neglect. Support from extended family and community organizations plays a crucial role in providing emotional and practical assistance, thus reinforcing the importance of robust social connections.

The study recommends the need for improving emotional support within blended families. Programs and interventions that promote open communication, positive conflict resolution, and emotional support from both parents and step-parents can significantly reduce neglect. Emphasizing the development of emotional cohesion and support systems within families will foster a nurturing environment that supports adolescents' well-being and mitigates neglect.

The study recommends the need for developing and implementing family counseling services particularly tailored for blended families. These services should focus on addressing financial, social, and emotional challenges that contribute to neglect. By providing professional guidance and support, families can better navigate the complexities of blended family dynamics and enhance their overall well-being.

The study recommends the need for educational programs that raise awareness about the impact of neglect and the importance of family well-being. Such programs should target both parents and adolescents, educating them about the signs of neglect, strategies for maintaining family cohesion, and available resources for support. Increased awareness can empower families to take proactive measures to prevent neglect and foster a healthier family environment.

6.3 Areas for further research

Since this study aimed at examining the impact of family wellbeing on neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents: a case of Mukono Town Council, the study recommends that; the same study should be done on other areas connected to this topic and these areas of further research needed include the following:

Further research should explore the mechanisms in which economic, social, and emotional well-being individually and collectively influence neglect patterns in blended families, particularly in different cultural and socio-economic contexts.

Longitudinal studies could provide insights into how changes in family well-being over time impact neglect patterns among adolescents. Investigating the effectiveness of various intervention strategies, such as financial support programs, family counseling, and community engagement initiatives, in mitigating neglect and improving family dynamics in blended families could also offer valuable guidance for policy and practice.

Examining the role of external factors, such as community resources and governmental support, in supporting family well-being and reducing neglect would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

REFERENCES

- Ainamani, H. E., Rukundo, G. Z., Nduhukire, T., Ndyareba, E., & Hecker, T. (2021). Child maltreatment, cognitive functions and the mediating role of mental health problems among maltreated children and adolescents in Uganda. *Child and adolescent psychiatry and mental health*, 15(1), 22.

- Alexander, J. F., & Robbins, M. (2019). Functional family therapy. *Encyclopedia of couple and family therapy*, 1232-1240.
- Avdibegović, E., & Brkić, M. (2020). Child neglect-causes and consequences. *Psychiatria Danubina*, 32(suppl. 3), 337-342.
- Daniel, V. (2018). Effects of Child Neglect on Psychological Distress in College Students.
- Dawadi, S., Shrestha, S., & Giri, R. A. (2021). Mixed-methods research: A discussion on its types, challenges, and criticisms. *Journal of Practical Studies in Education*, 2(2), 25-36.
- Dolan, P., Žegarac, N., & Arsić, J. (2020). Family Support as a right of the child. *Social Work and Social Sciences Review*, 21(2), 8-26.
- Featherstone, B., Morris, K., Daniel, B., Bywaters, P., Brady, G., Bunting, L., ... & Mirza, N. (2019). Poverty, inequality, child abuse and neglect: Changing the conversation across the UK in child protection? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 97, 127-133.
- Greene, C. A., Haisley, L., Wallace, C., & Ford, J. D. (2020). Intergenerational effects of childhood maltreatment: A systematic review of the parenting practices of adult survivors of childhood abuse, neglect, and violence. *Clinical psychology review*, 80, 101891.
- Hecker, T., Boettcher, V. S., Landolt, M. A., & Hermenau, K. (2019). Child neglect and its relation to emotional and behavioral problems: A cross-sectional study of primary school-aged children in Tanzania. *Development and psychopathology*, 31(1), 325-339.
- Hewitt, B., & Churchill, B. (2020). Convergence and difference: Marriage and family life from a cross-cultural perspective. In *Cross-cultural family research and practice* (pp. 57-102). Academic Press.

- López Narbona, A. M., Moreno Mínguez, A., & Ortega Gaspar, M. (2021). Family structure, parental practices, and child wellbeing in post-divorce situations: The case of shared parenting.
- McCoy, M. L., & Keen, S. M. (2022). *Child abuse and neglect*. Routledge.
- Mkabile, S., & Swartz, L. (2020). 'I waited for it until forever': Community barriers to accessing intellectual disability services for children and their families in Cape Town, South Africa. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(22), 8504.
- Nabayinda, J., Kizito, S., Ssentumbwe, V., Namatovu, P., Bahar, O. S., Damulira, C., ... & Ssewamala, F. M. (2023). The relationship between family cohesion and depression among school-going children with elevated symptoms of behavioral challenges in Southern Uganda. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 72(5), S11-S17.
- Namugga, J. K. (2021). *Child neglect and literacy in selected primary schools in Katabi town council, Wakiso District* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Kisubi).
- Natukunda, H. P., Mubiri, P., Cluver, L. D., Ddumba-Nyanzi, I., Bukenya, B., & Walakira, E. J. (2021). Which factors are associated with adolescent reports of experiencing various forms of abuse at the family level in post-conflict Northern Uganda? *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 36(21-22), NP12067-NP12096.
- O'Connor, S., Brenner, M., & Coyne, I. (2019). Family-centred care of children and young people in the acute hospital setting: a concept analysis. *Journal of clinical nursing*, 28(17-18), 3353-3367.
- Pieper, D., Lorenz, R. C., Rombey, T., Jacobs, A., Rissling, O., Freitag, S., & Matthias, K. (2021). Authors should clearly report how they derived the overall rating when applying AMSTAR 2—a cross-sectional study. *Journal of clinical epidemiology*, 129, 97-103.

- Sandhya, S. (2020). The Glocal Family: Exploring Its International Variations Using a Family Systems Framework. *The Handbook of Systemic Family Therapy*, 4, 49-76.
- Sserwanja, Q., Kawuki, J., & Kim, J. H. (2021). Increased child abuse in Uganda amidst COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of paediatrics and child health*, 57(2), 188-191.
- Therrien, C., Le Gall, J., & Geoffrion, K. (2021). *Mixed families in a transnational world*. Routledge.
- Timans, R., Wouters, P., & Heilbron, J. (2019). Mixed methods research: what it is and what it could be. *Theory and Society*, 48, 193-216.
- Toth, S. L., & Manly, J. T. (2019). Developmental consequences of child abuse and neglect: Implications for intervention. *Child Development Perspectives*, 13(1), 59-64.
- Turner, H. A., Vanderminden, J., Finkelhor, D., & Hamby, S. (2019). Child neglect and the broader context of child victimization. *Child maltreatment*, 24(3), 265-274.
- ÜNAL, H., & Boz, M. (2020). Development of the child neglect and abuse awareness scale for parents and its relationship with various variables. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 13(1).
- Vanderminden, J., Hamby, S., David-Ferdon, C., Kacha-Ochana, A., Merrick, M., Simon, T. R., ... & Turner, H. (2019). Rates of neglect in a national sample: Child and family characteristics and psychological impact. *Child abuse & neglect*, 88, 256-265.
- Wang, X., & Cheng, Z. (2020). Cross-sectional studies: strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations. *Chest*, 158(1), S65-S71.

Wikle, J. S., & Hoagland, A. (2020). Adolescent interactions with family and emotions during interactions: Variation by family structure. *Journal of Family Psychology, 34*(5), 544.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

For teenagers/ adolescents aged 12-18 years from selected heads of blended families in Mukono Town Council

Dear sir/madam

My name is Karigirwa Brenda; I am a student of SWASA at Uganda Christian University. I am conducting a study on “family wellbeing and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents: a case of Mukono Town Council.” You have been specifically selected to participate in this study and the information collected shall be purely for academic purpose and treated with the highest level of confidentiality. The success of this study shall greatly dependent on your response. Your cooperation shall highly be appreciated.

Section A. Bio Data

Please tick the most appropriate answer

1. What is your gender?

a) Male

b) Female

2. What is your age?

a) 12-14 years

b) 15-16 years

c) 17-18 years

3. What is your level of education?

a) Primary

b) Secondary

c) Tertiary

d) No education

Note: In these subsequent sections, use the scale provided to tick in the box of the relevant answer that describes your opinion. **NB: 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3= Not Sure, 2= Disagree and 1=Strongly disagree.**

Section B: Family Wellbeing

	Statements	Responses				
No.	Economic wellbeing of the family	5	4	3	2	1
1	My family always has enough money to buy food and other necessities.					
2	I can participate in school trips and activities because my family can afford it.					
3	My family can afford to pay for my school fees without difficulties.					
4	I have all the school supplies and clothes I need.					
5	We do not worry about paying for medical expenses.					
6	My home is comfortable and meets my basic living needs.					
No.	Social wellbeing of the family	5	4	3	2	1
1	I have a good relationship with all my step-siblings.					
2	We often do fun activities together as a family.					
3	I feel supported by my extended family members (grandparents, aunts, uncles).					
4	My family participates in community events and social activities.					
5	I feel accepted by my friends and community as part of a blended family.					
6	My family receives help from community organizations					

	when needed.					
No.	Emotional wellbeing of the family	5	4	3	2	1
1	I feel loved and valued by all my parents and step-parents.					
2	We talk openly about our feelings in my family.					
3	Conflicts in my family are resolved in a positive way.					
4	I feel comfortable expressing my emotions to my family members.					
5	My parents and step-parents listen to my problems and concerns.					
6	I feel emotionally supported by my family.					

Section C: Neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council

	Statements	Responses				
No.	Neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents	5	4	3	2	1
1	Sometimes, I feel like my parents/guardians do not pay enough attention to me.					
2	There are times when my basic needs (food, clothing, shelter) are not met.					
3	I feel ignored or unimportant at home.					
4	I do not get enough emotional support from my family.					
5	My educational needs and school activities are often overlooked.					
6	I sometimes feel unsafe or unsupported at home.					

Thank you very much for your cooperation

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

For the key informants (Probation Officer, LC1 chairman, local councilor & social workers)

Dear respondent,

My name is Karigirwa Brenda; I am a student of SWASA at Uganda Christian University. I am conducting a study on “family wellbeing and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents: a case of Mukono Town Council.” You have been specifically selected to participate in this study and the information collected shall be purely for academic purpose and treated with the highest level of confidentiality. The success of this study shall greatly dependent on your response. Your cooperation shall highly be appreciated.

Section A: Introductions

1. Tell me about yourself
2. What is your profession?
3. How long have you worked in that profession?

Section B: Relationship between economic wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council

4. How do you perceive the impact of a family's economic status on the care and supervision of adolescents in blended families in Mukono Town Council?
5. Can you provide examples or observations where economic hardships have led to increased neglect patterns among adolescents in blended families?

Section C: Relationship between social wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council

6. In your experience, how does the social integration and support network of blended families influence the neglect patterns among adolescents in Mukono Town Council?

7. What social factors do you think are most critical in preventing neglect of adolescents in blended families in this community?

Section D: Relationship between emotional wellbeing of the family and neglect patterns in blends/among adolescents in Mukono Town Council

8. How do you think the emotional wellbeing of parents and children in blended families affects the likelihood of adolescent neglect in Mukono Town Council?
9. Could you share any insights or examples where emotional distress within blended families has resulted in neglect of adolescents?

Thank you for your cooperation